

Project Name: Northwest State Route 138 Corridor Improvement Project

District/County/Route/Postmiles: 7/LA/138/0.0-36.8

7/LA/05/79.5-83.1

7/LA/14/73.4-74.4

EA: 265100

EIR CERTIFICATION

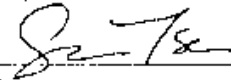
Part I. This is to certify that, in accordance with Section 15090 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) has been completed in compliance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The Final EIR reflects the Department's independent judgment and analysis

Env Branch Chief:

Susan Tse

Print name

Signature



Date: 6/28/17

Part II. This certifies that I have reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the project. Findings have been prepared for each of the significant environmental impact(s) identified in the Final EIR. These findings are attached along with a statement of overriding considerations (if applicable) supporting approval of the project.

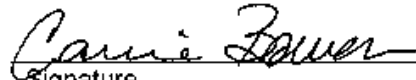
District Director:

(or person designated to sign the Project Report)

Carrie L. Bowen

Print name

Signature



Date: 6/28/2017

FINDINGS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR NORTHWEST STATE ROUTE 138 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FROM INTERSTATE 5 TO STATE ROUTE 14 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The following information is presented to comply with State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in FEIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Removal of Kinsey Mansion Neoclassical eclectic design-defining features such as the white picket fence and large half-circle private driveway, as well as the iconic lawn ornamentation would be cleared.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will provide project design plans to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for review and comment for the retaining wall, sound wall, fencing, and relocated driveway associated with the Kinsey Mansion to ensure conformance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Biological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Potential to permanently impact 4.57 acres and temporarily impact 0.72 acres of southern cottonwood willow riparian forest and southern willow scrub.

Approximately 14.74 acres of Joshua tree woodland, and 81.29 acres of California juniper woodland may be potentially impacted. Potential to have

permanent impacts to no more than 1.63 acres of Waters of the U.S. found within the Biological Study Area. Five (5) special-status plants and 28 special-status wildlife species have the potential to be impacted. In addition, there would be potential impacts to several desert kit fox dens, burrowing owl, and foraging habitat loss of Swainson's hawk and golden eagle.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

Through early coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and due to the sensitive status of various species, off-site mitigation parcels of equal habitat quality will be purchased at a 2 to 1 ratio. To reduce the impacts to foraging habitat, similar habitat within the region should be preserved in perpetuity. Caltrans will develop the appropriate level of off-site mitigation for this project through consultation with United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and CDFW, as well as restore disturbed habitat to preconstruction conditions with the use of native vegetation for landscaping. Both permanent and temporary impacts to jurisdictional features of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and CDFW will be mitigated for and would be determined during the permitting process with the agencies with considerations to on-site restoration, off-site mitigation, and in-lieu fees.

Cultural Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The Kinsey Mansion is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. The project proposes to construct a new alignment for SR-138 which would route through a portion of the Kinsey Mansion property. The new alignment would cut directly through the Mansion property and impact the white picket fence and large half-circle private driveway, as well as forcing the removal or relocation of iconic lawn ornamentation. Many of the Mansion's character-defining features, including the expansive lawn and ornamentation, which contribute to the Mansion's fashionable Neoclassical eclectic design style, would be physically impacted.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

Caltrans will provide project design plans to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for review and comment for the retaining wall, fencing, and relocated driveway associated with the Kinsey Mansion to ensure conformance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic

Paleontological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Shallow excavations in areas mapped as Pleistocene alluvial deposits, the Ridge Route Formation, the Hungry Valley Formation, and the Santa Margarita Formation have the potential to encounter paleontological resources.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

Implementation of the paleontological resources mitigation plan would facilitate the identification and treatment of paleontological resources.

Noise

Adverse Environmental Effects:

There are five (5) receptor locations with significant noise impacts (more than 12 dBA increase in noise level from the existing).

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

Sound walls 1 through 6 as described in *Section 3.2.7 Noise and Vibration* of the FEIR would mitigate the noise impacts in those locations where there are significant noise increases.

Hydrology and Floodplain

Adverse Environmental Effects:

A preliminary floodplain analysis indicates that the project segment of SR-138 is within flood zone A. As defined by Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), flood zone A includes areas of

100-year flood, base flood elevations, and flood hazard factors not determined. The source of flows in the ephemeral, intermittently flowing streams is storm water runoff and sheet flow from nearby hillsides. These flows can be concentrated in canyons and washes to create short-term flood impacts.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The recommended mitigation measures to mitigate the impacts to the existing drainage system include Storm Water Treatment Best Management Practices (BMP) and a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP).

Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Storm water from the project would discharge to Department of Water Resources (DWR)'s jurisdiction. The source of flows in the ephemeral, intermittently flowing streams is storm water runoff and sheet flow from nearby hillsides. During construction activities, excavated soil would be exposed, and there would be an increased potential for soil erosion compared to existing conditions.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the FEIR.

Statement of Facts:

The recommended mitigation measures to mitigate the impacts to the existing drainage system include Storm Water Treatment Best Management Practices (BMP) and a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP). Concentrated flows would be collected into stabilized earth ditches or lined ditches. Work within DWR's right-of-way at the California Aqueduct crossings would need to be conducted during winter months when the demand for water supply is relatively low. The proposed drainage and storm water treatment design would be reviewed by DWR during the design phase of the project. Following completion of construction activities, appropriate erosion control measures would be implemented to ensure that soils disturbed by construction are stabilized, to minimize non-storm water discharges into water bodies in the project area, and to meet the requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and Lahontan RWQCB, as well as the project permits.

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR NORTHWEST STATE ROUTE 138 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FROM INTERSTATE 5 TO STATE ROUTE 14 IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The following information is presented to comply with State California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15903), and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following impacts have been identified as significant and not fully mitigable:

Farmland

Existing farmland-related land uses within the project footprint would be converted to transportation-related use. Although avoidance, minimization measures and mitigation measures have been proposed, farmland conversion cannot be entirely avoided, and would result in unavoidable significant effects on farmlands within the project footprint. The proposed project, in combination with other projects in the area would continue the regional trend of converting farmland to nonagricultural uses. Based upon the foregoing information, impacts of the project would combine with impacts of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions to result in an unavoidable adverse cumulative impact.

Overriding considerations that support approval of this recommended project are as follows:

Alternative 2 (Expressway/Highway) has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would meet the project's Purpose and Need, as discussed in *Section 1.2 Purpose and Need* of the FEIR. This alternative would improve mobility and operations on State Route (SR) 138 and in northwest Los Angeles County, enhance safety within the SR-138 Corridor based on current and future projected traffic conditions, and accommodate foreseeable increases in travel and goods movement within northern Los Angeles County. Other factors that were considered in the identification of the Preferred Alternative are as follows:

Natural Resource Factors

- The Preferred Alternative would result in less impact to Joshua Tree Woodland compared to Alternative 1.
- The Preferred Alternative would result in less impact to Grazing Land, as classified by the California Department of Conservation, compared to Alternative 1.

Community Impact and Local Planning Factors

- The Preferred Alternative is consistent with County of Los Angeles land use and community planning goals, policies and objectives as framed by the Los Angeles County General Plan and Antelope Valley Area Plan as discussed in Section 3.1.1.1, Existing and Future Land Use.
- The Preferred Alternative would result in less impact to Agricultural Land Uses, as designated by the Los Angeles County General Plan and Antelope Valley Area Plan, compared to Alternative 1.
- The Preferred Alternative would result in less displaced residential units compared to Alternative 1 without the Antelope Acres Design Option.

Caltrans concludes, based upon the whole record that the economic, social, technical, and environmental benefits of improved mobility and operations on SR-138 and in northwest Los Angeles County, as well as the enhancement of safety within the SR-138 Corridor, outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts associated with its construction and operation and determines that said benefits override the significance of their associated adverse impacts.