

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Item 9(d)
SMMC
6-1-2009



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May 12, 2009

Paul Edelman
Chief, Natural Resources Planning
Ramirez Canyon Park
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
5810 Ramirez Canyon Road
Malibu, CA 90265

Subject: Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Finding for the I-5 HOV/Truck Lane Project

Dear Mr. Edelman:

The purpose of this letter is to request concurrence from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) that the I-5 HOV and Truck Lane project's impact to the Santa Clarita Woodlands State Park is *de minimus*. Enclosed with this letter is the *de minimis* impact finding including the proposed avoidance, minimization measures and enhancements to the resource. Please sign and date at the concurrence line within 15 days upon receipt of this document.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed project, please contact Mine Struhl at (213) 897-5446, or at mine_struhl@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Kosinski".

Ron Kosinski
Deputy District Director
Division of Environmental Planning

SECTION 4(F) DE MINIMIS IMPACT FINDING

I-5 HOV and Truck Lanes Project SR-14 to Parker Road Los Angeles County, California

Description of the Section 4(f) Resource

Santa Clarita Woodlands Park is a public park on the north-facing flank of the Santa Susana Mountains to the west of I-5. These 4,000 acres of public parkland is owned and managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC). It consists of numerous canyons and includes Ed Davis Park in Towsley Canyon.

Project Description

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to widen existing Interstate 5 (I-5) to include high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and truck climbing lanes from State Route 14 (SR-14) on the south to Parker Road on the north, a distance of approximately 13.6 miles. The proposed improvements include extending the existing HOV lanes on I-5 from SR-14 to south of Parker Road, a distance of approximately 13 miles, and adding truck climbing lanes from the SR-14 interchange at Calgrove Boulevard (northbound) and to Pico Canyon Road/Lyons Avenue (southbound), a distance of approximately 3 to 4 miles.

The proposed project includes the following components: addition of HOV, truck, auxiliary lanes; bridge widening and/or replacement; modification of on- and off-ramps; upsizing or replacement of culverts; retaining walls; utility relocation; additional and upgraded Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Facilities, and new landscaping and irrigation. Figure 2 shows the project features at the vicinity of Santa Clarita Woodlands State Park.

Project Impacts to Santa Clarita Woodlands Park

The proposed project would require the acquisition of approximately 0.026 acre of permanent right-of-way. Alternative 2 (the preferred alternative) would modify the existing I-5 freeway abutting property within Santa Clarita Woodlands Park. Placement of support columns would be required to allow for widening of the existing overhead freeway structure within the area identified.

Proposed Avoidance, Minimization, Mitigation, Enhancements to the Resource

The following measures to minimize harm and to preserve and enhance those features and values of the property that originally qualified the property for Section 4(f) protection will be implemented as project commitments:

- The standard Caltrans 15-ft setback from the edge of the bridge to the right-of-way will be evaluated further during design, and reductions will be considered to reduce impacts to the parcel. Caltrans is willing to reduce the setback, and will need to evaluate the reduction when more detailed information is available during the design of the project.
- The amount of \$65,000.00 will be paid to the SMMC through an in-lieu fee program prior to start of construction.

- Caltrans will work with the SMMC on possible fencing locations, if necessary.
- Caltrans will pursue possible acquisition of APN 2826-025-007 with the owner of the parcel, if an agreement can be reached on the purchase price. The parcel will be turned over to the SMMC.

Public Involvement

A public hearing was conducted for the project on February 5, 2009. Documentation of the public involvement process can be found in Chapter 4 of the environmental document.

Official with Jurisdiction Concurrence

The SMMC supports the proposed project and concurs with the proposed impacts and minimization/enhancement measures listed above.

Conclusion

Based upon the above information, the following assessment has been made:

- The proposed project project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to Santa Clarita Woodlands Park.
- There are no anticipated impacts that will adversely affect the activities, features and attributes of Santa Clarita Woodlands Park.

De minimis finding on the I-5 HOV/Truck Lane project is being carried out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327.

Under 49 USC 303(d), FHWA may determine, if certain conditions are met, that a project will have only a *de minimis* impact, as defined in 23 CFR 774.17, on a property protected by Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. With respect to public parks, FHWA may make a finding of *de minimis* impact only if it determines that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features and attributes of the park eligible for 4(f) protection and the officials with jurisdiction over the park concur in the finding. The *de minimis* impact finding is based on the degree or level of impact including any avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures that are included in the project.

As such, Caltrans has determined that the project's impact to Santa Clarita Woodlands Park is *de minimus*.

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy



California Department of Transportation