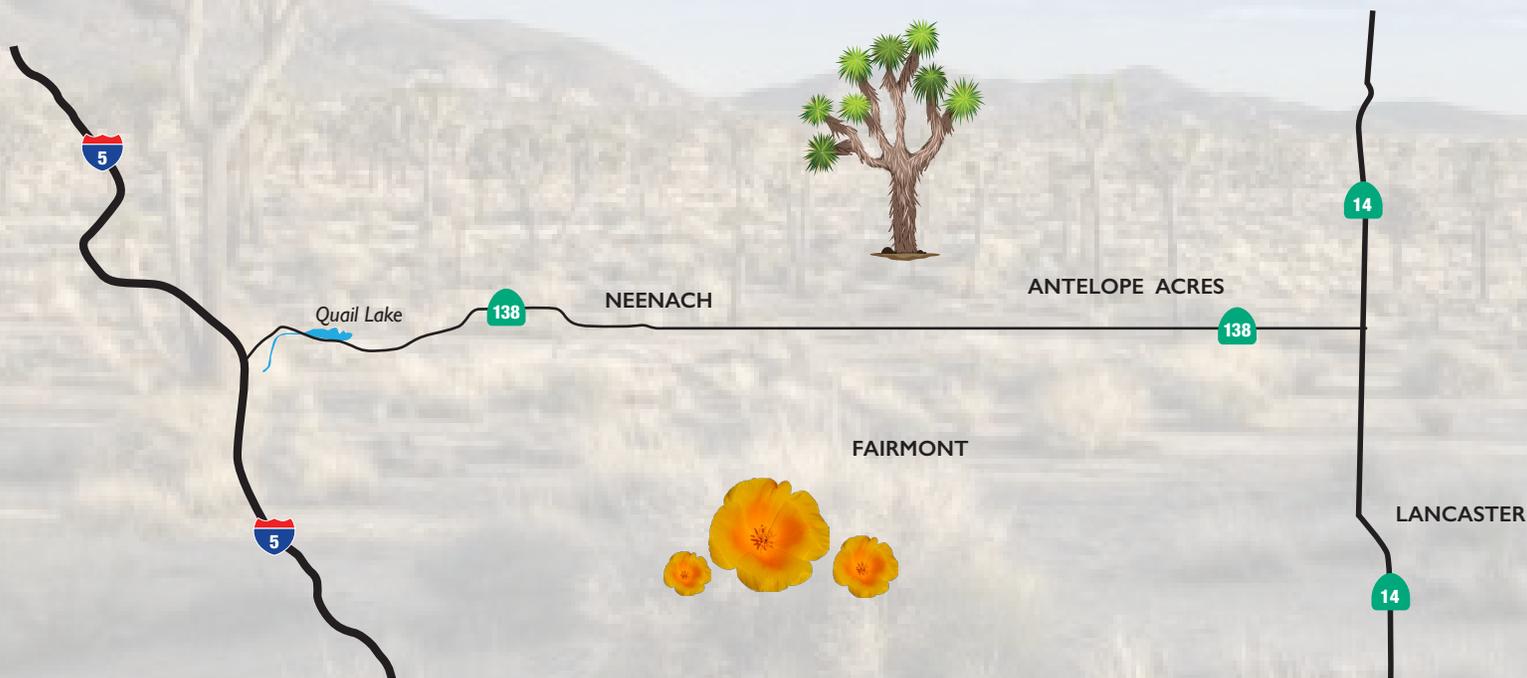


# Northwest State Route 138 Corridor Improvement Project

Los Angeles County, CA  
DISTRICT 7- LA- 138 (PM 0.0/36.8);  
DISTRICT 7- LA- 05 (PM 79.5/83.1);  
DISTRICT 7- LA- 14 (PM 73.4/74.4)  
265100/ 0700001816

## DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT and SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION



Prepared by the State of California Department of Transportation  
and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried-out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 USC 327.



July 2016

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

SCH# 2013111016  
07-LA-138-PM 0.0/36.8  
07-LA-05-PM 79.5/83.1  
07-LA-14-PM 73.4/74.4  
EA 26510  
EFIS 0700001816

Widen and Improve State Route 138 (PM 0.0/36.8) from Interstate 5 to State Route 14 in Northern Los Angeles County.

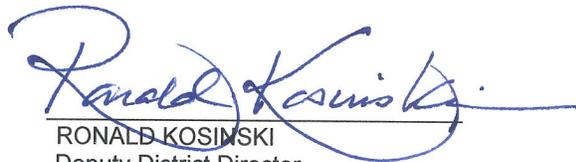
**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT and Section 4(f)  
Evaluation**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code  
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C) and 49 USC 303  
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

COOPERATING AGENCIES:  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX,  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services  
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES:  
California Transportation Commission  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife,  
California Water Quality Control Board  
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

July 28, 2016  
Date of Approval

  
RONALD KOSINSKI  
Deputy District Director  
Division of Environmental Planning District 7  
California Department of Transportation

For additional information concerning this environmental document, contact:

Natalie Hill, Associate Environmental Planner  
(213) 897-0841; [Natalie.Hill@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Natalie.Hill@dot.ca.gov)  
Caltrans District 7  
100 S. Main St, MS-16A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Abstract:** The proposed project would improve mobility and operations, enhance safety, and accommodate foreseeable increases in travel and goods movement. The project is needed to bring roadway features up to current standards, improve connectivity, and because future demand would exceed the current facility capacity. Substantial environmental effects are anticipated to historic properties, cumulative effects, and noise in relation to CEQA. Comments should be sent to the contact above.

## **SUMMARY**

The proposed project is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is the lead agency under NEPA as well as CEQA. In addition, FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried-out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 327.

Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not lead to a determination of significance under NEPA. Because NEPA is concerned with the significance of the project as a whole, quite often a "lower level" document can be prepared for NEPA.

After receiving comments from the public and reviewing agencies, a Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) would be prepared. Caltrans may prepare additional environmental and/or engineering studies to address comments received on the draft document. The Final EIR/EIS would include responses to comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS and would identify the preferred alternative. After the Final EIR/EIS is made available, if Caltrans decides to approve the project, a Notice of Determination would be published for compliance with CEQA, and a Record of Decision would be published for compliance with NEPA.

### **S.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The existing State Route 138 (SR-138) between Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route 14 (SR-14) is a 2-lane conventional highway that contributes to the local circulation network and provides an alternate route for west to east traffic in northwest (NW) Los Angeles County. The NW SR-138 Corridor Improvement Project (project) would widen SR-138 and provide operational and safety improvements. The project corridor spans west to east approximately 36.8 miles (Post Mile [PM] 0.0 to PM 36.8) in the NW portion of Los Angeles County, just south of the Kern County border. It also includes improvements to the connections ramps on I-5 on the west and connection ramps and structure over the SR-14 on the east.

### **S.2 PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of this project is to:

- Improve mobility and operations on SR-138 and in NW Los Angeles County;
- Enhance safety within the SR-138 Corridor based on current and future projected traffic conditions;
- Accommodate foreseeable increases in travel and goods movement within northern Los Angeles County.

The need for the project is based on an assessment of the future transportation demands, existing capacity of the facility, historic accident data, existing non-standard roadway features, present and future social demands, and forecasted economic development.

### **S.3 PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed project would improve SR-138 between the I-5 interchange and the SR-14 interchange. The project limits are from Post Mile (PM) 0.0 to PM 36.8 on SR-138, PM 79.5 to 83.1 on I-5, and PM 73.4 to 74.4 on SR-14. The scope of the project is focused on SR-138 between I-5 and SR-14 in northern

Los Angeles County. Based on the results of the alternatives' evaluation, two build alternatives have been identified that would meet the project's purpose and need. These alternatives, as well as the No-Build Alternative, have been assessed for their full environmental impacts.

Several alternatives were deemed "non-viable" and thus would not be analyzed further either from an engineering, cost, or environmental standpoint (for further discussion, please refer to Section 2.1.3 "Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion"). A brief description of each viable alternative analyzed and considered for the project is described below.

### **S.3.1 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

This alternative would maintain the current configuration of the existing freeway, ramps, and local intersections within the project limits. No improvements would be made to SR-138.

### **S.3.2 BUILD ALTERNATIVE 1- Freeway/ Expressway**

Alternative 1 (Freeway/Expressway) would include a 6-lane freeway from the I-5 interchange to 300<sup>th</sup> Street West, and a 4-lane expressway from 300<sup>th</sup> Street West to the SR-14 interchange generally following the existing alignment of SR-138. It would also include improvements (such as auxiliary lanes) on the I-5 and SR-14 freeway connectors, from PM 79.5 to PM 83.1 on I-5 and PM 73.4 to PM 74.4 on SR-14.

#### **BUILD ALTERNATIVE 1 WITH DESIGN OPTION**

**Antelope Acres Bypass.** There is a design option with this alternative to include a bypass route around the Antelope Acres community. This option was developed to reduce the impacts to the community of Antelope Acres due to the proposed four-lane expressway along the existing alignment of SR-138. The alignment would bypass the community to the north along West Avenue C and going from west to east, the alignment would begin to deviate from the existing SR-138 near 100<sup>th</sup> Street West and continue in a northeasterly direction towards West Avenue C. After paralleling West Avenue C for approximately 1.0 mile, the alignment would continue in a southeasterly direction back towards the existing SR-138, and eventually join the existing SR-138 near 70<sup>th</sup> Street West. The existing highway would be relinquished to the County as a local roadway between 100<sup>th</sup> Street West and 70<sup>th</sup> Street West, with additional speed reduction measures proposed to reduce cut-through traffic.

### **S.3.3 BUILD ALTERNATIVE 2- Expressway/Limited Access Conventional Highway**

Alternative 2 (Expressway/Highway) would include a 6-lane freeway from the I-5 interchange to Gorman Post Road, a 6-lane Expressway from Gorman Post Road to 300<sup>th</sup> Street West, a 4-lane expressway from 300<sup>th</sup> Street West to 240<sup>th</sup> Street West, and a 4-lane limited access conventional highway from 240<sup>th</sup> Street West to the SR-14 interchange, generally following the existing alignment of SR-138. There would also be improvements to the I-5/SR-138 and SR-138/SR-14 freeway connections and to the structure that crosses over SR 14. The study limits on these connectors would be the same as Build Alternative 1; on I-5 from PM 79.5 to PM 83.1 and on SR -14 the limits are from PM 73.4 to PM 74.4.

## **S.4 PROJECT IMPACTS**

Environmental impacts associated with the proposed No Build Alternative, Build Alternative 1, Build Alternative 1 with Antelope Acres Design Option, and Build Alternative 2 were fully analyzed, and the results are summarized in Table S-1.

**TABLE S-1: SUMMARY OF MAJOR POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM ALTERNATIVES**

Potential Impact	No Build	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 1 with Antelope Acres Loop Design Option	Build Alternative 2
<b>Land Use and Planning (Consistency with General Plan)</b>	No Impacts	Antelope Acres would be spatially divided if Build Alternative 1 was implemented. No significant impacts with the inclusion of the proposed minimization and/or mitigation measures. Consistent with General Plan.	Consistent with General Plan, no significant impacts.	Antelope Acres would be spatially divided if Build Alternative 2 was implemented. No significant impacts with the inclusion of the proposed minimization and/or mitigation measures. Consistent with General Plan.
<b>Community/ Economic</b>	No Impact	Alternative 1 would bisect the Antelope Acres community. It would benefit the community by providing safer crossings. It would impact the community by limiting access and change the community character with the widening of the roadway and other highway safety features (ie. guardrails etc.)	No significant impacts with the inclusion of avoidance and minimization measures identified.	Alternative 2 would bisect the Antelope Acres community. It would benefit the community by providing safer crossings. It would impact the community by limiting access and change the community character with the widening of the roadway and other highway safety features (ie. guardrails etc).
<b>Farmland</b>	No Impact	Permanent Impacts would occur to 0.3 acres of Unique Farmland and 15.1 acres of Prime Farmland. There would be no impacts to farmland of Statewide Importance (as classified by the CA Department of Conservation).	Permanent Impacts would occur to 0.3 acres of Unique Farmland and 14.6 acres of Prime Farmland. There would be no impacts to farmland of Statewide Importance (as classified by the CA Department of Conservation).	Permanent Impacts would occur to 0.3 acres of Unique Farmland and 15.1 acres of Prime Farmland. There would be no impacts to farmland of Statewide Importance (as classified by the CA Department of Conservation).

Potential Impact	No Build	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 1 with Antelope Acres Loop Design Option	Build Alternative 2
<b>Housing Displacement/ Business Displacement</b>	No housing units or businesses would be displaced	An estimated 17 housing units/ 2 businesses would be displaced.	An estimated 11 housing units/ 2 businesses would be displaced.	An estimated 14 housing units/ 2 businesses would be displaced.
<b>Environmental Justice</b>	No Environmental Justice (EJ) impacts	No EJ impacts.	No EJ impacts	No EJ impacts
<b>Utilities and Emergency Services</b>	No disruption or displacement	Utilities would be relocated along the corridor. No significant impacts are anticipated.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Traffic, Pedestrian and Bike Access</b>	No impacts or improvements	Existing facilities would be maintained and/or enhanced.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Visual Quality</b>	No change in visual quality or character	Visual impacts would be less than significant with the avoidance and minimization measures included.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Cultural/ Historical Resources</b>	No impact	1 Historic property would be adversely affected.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Paleontological Resources</b>	No Impact	Implementation of the paleontological resources mitigation plan would facilitate the identification and treatment of paleontological resources. Impacts would be less than significant.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Archeological Resources</b>	No impact	Archeological impacts would be less than significant with the avoidance and minimization measures included.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Flood Control/ Hydrology/ Water Quality/ Stormwater</b>	No impact	With implementation of recommended measures, Best Management Practices (BMPs) and development of a Storm water Mitigation Plan (SWMP), direct impacts associated with Alternative 1 would be less than significant.	Same as Alternative 1	With implementation of recommended measures, BMP's and development of a SWMP, direct impacts associated with Alternative 2 would be less than significant.

Potential Impact	No Build	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 1 with Antelope Acres Loop Design Option	Build Alternative 2
<b>Geology/ Soils/ Seismicity</b>	No impact	Potential impacts would be temporary, and exposed soils and cut slopes would be stabilized after construction is complete. No significant impacts with appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Hazardous Waste/ Materials</b>	No impact	Project-specific impacts related to hazardous waste/materials would be avoided, minimized and mitigated through conformance with applicable regulatory requirements and implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Air Quality</b>	Potentially inconsistent with regional plans and programs such as the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan and 2015 Federal Transportation Improvement Plan since the project would not be constructed as approved in the Regional Transportation Plan for the area.	During construction, short-term degradation of air quality may occur due to the release of particulate emissions generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and other activities related to construction. No significant impacts with the implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures described.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1

Potential Impact	No Build	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 1 with Antelope Acres Loop Design Option	Build Alternative 2
<b>Noise</b>	No change in noise.	Noise would increase- significant impacts under CEQA for some properties.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Energy</b>	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
<b>Biological Resources</b>	No impact	Approximately 20.97 acres southern cottonwood willow riparian forest and southern willow scrub may be potentially impacted. Approximately 29.23 acres of Joshua tree woodland, and 112.88 acres of California juniper woodland may be potentially impacted. Approximately 1.008 acres of Waters of the U.S. (WUS) may be permanently impacted of which approximately 0.062 acres are considered wetland WUS. In addition, five (5) special-status plants and 21 special-status wildlife species have the potential to be impacted. CDFW and USFWS consultations have been ongoing to address project impacts.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Section 4(f) Properties</b>	No impact	Individual evaluation for the Historic property (Kinsey mansion) and three <i>de minimus</i> findings for historic resources.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Cumulative and Secondary Impacts</b>	None	Biological Resources (Natural Communities), Noise (Substantial Noise Increase- CEQA), and Farmland.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Estimated Project Cost</b>	No cost	\$830 million	\$839 million	\$725 million

## S.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

Several of the project elements have been modified to avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts. Proposed mitigation measures are listed in Table S-2, where avoidance and minimization attempts could not fully resolve the impacts. Implementation of the mitigation measures below would result in less than significant impacts.

**TABLE S.2: PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES**

<b>Environmental Impact</b>	<b>Build Alternative 1</b>	<b>Build Alternative 1 with Antelope Acres Bypass Design Option</b>	<b>Build Alternative 2</b>
<b>Cultural/ Historical Resources</b>	<p>A Programmatic Agreement (PA) in consultation with the SHPO to identify mitigation measures to reduce impacts to eligible historical properties.</p> <p>These mitigation measures would be incorporated to minimize impacts to Kinsey Mansion.</p> <p>If archeological site SR-051 cannot be avoided, data recovery would be necessary to mitigate impact.</p>	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Paleontological Resources</b>	Paleontological Mitigation Plan (PMP)	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Noise</b>	Noise abatement walls in coordination with the affected community (CEQA-only)	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Biological Resources</b>	Through early coordination with 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. Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures for biological resources have been listed in the Environmental Commitment Record (ECR) as BIO-1 to BIO-138. See Chapter 3.3 for more detailed mitigation measures.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1
<b>Cumulative Effects</b>	Farmland would have a cumulatively considerable effect. Pending response from the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Caltrans will enter into an agreement with the DOC California Farmland Conservancy Program to preserve farmland. Impacts to Natural Communities would be mitigated on and off-site at 2:1.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1

## **S.6 COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCIES**

Caltrans and Metro have initiated an outreach program that has included a number of meetings with elected officials, town councils, stakeholders, and the community at large. The public has been kept apprised of the status of the project and provided input through the scoping process. The public would be able to continue to provide input on the project as it proceeds through the environmental process and design phase.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Intent (NOI) were issued in November 2013. The NOI was published in the Federal Register on November 13, 2013.

Two scoping meetings were held in March 2014 and four Cooperating and Participating agency meetings were held between March 2014 and June 2015. The comments from the scoping meetings focused on the following issues: Water supply, maintaining the rural setting of the area, right-of-way impacts, safety improvements, bicycle corridor enhancements, and support for the option that does not displace residents.

In May 2015, two open houses were held to update the public other interested stakeholders on the proposed project and provide information on the Alternatives. Approximately 180 people attended the meetings; 110 on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 70 on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Each of the meetings featured an open house format allowing the public to receive updates through information stations and to have their questions answered by technical staff. For ease of access, one of the meetings was held on the Western side of the Northwest 138 Corridor and the other one at the Eastern side of the project limits.

In addition, briefings and project update meetings with elected officials, resource agencies and homeowner associations in the project area have been held to present project updates and receive feedback. Chapter 5 includes a full description of public coordination efforts and meetings. After the public hearing and circulation of the environmental document, Caltrans would continue the outreach effort with the community.

At this time, the following permits, reviews, and approvals are anticipated for the project:

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Permit/Approval</b>	<b>Status</b>
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Section 7 Consultation for Threatened and Endangered Species (May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect Concurrence Letter)	Ongoing consultation. Must obtain concurrence by Final Environmental Document.
United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Section 404 Nationwide Permit	Application to be submitted and permit to be obtained prior to the project Ready-to-List (RTL).
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	1602 Agreement 2081 Take Permit	Application to be submitted and permit to be obtained prior to the project Ready-to-List (RTL).
Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) Los Angeles & Lahontan	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (includes BMPs)  Section 401 Certification	Applications to be submitted and permits to be obtained prior to the project Ready-to-List (RTL).
Los Angeles County	Freeway or Controlled Access Highway Agreement	Would be implemented following project approval for a new freeway or the conversion of an existing conventional highway to freeway or expressway.
Department of Water Resources (DWR)	Review / Approval of Quail Lake Outlet modifications.	An encroachment permit to construct would be required. Improvements would be designed under an encroachment permit application/agreement.
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)	Review of EIR/EIS	DWR would coordinate the review of the Draft Environmental Document with FERC as part of their responsibility as owner of the facility.
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Draft Financial Plan and Project Management Plan	Needed prior to Record of Decision (ROD).
State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)	Finding of Effect and Programmatic Agreement	Ongoing consultation.