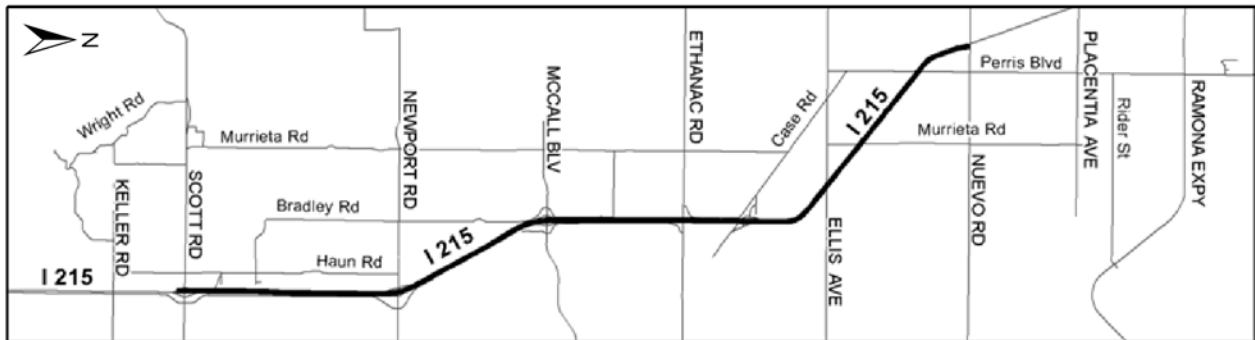


Interstate 215 Widening Project from Scott Road to Nuevo Road

City of Perris, City of Menifee, and Riverside County
(Unincorporated Areas), Riverside County, California
District 08-RIV-215 (PM 14.2/28.5)
0F1620

Initial Study [with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration]/Environmental Assessment



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

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.



October 2010

General Information about This Document

What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Department), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), has prepared this initial study/environmental assessment (IS/EA), which examines the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives being considered for the proposed project located in Riverside County, California. The Department is the lead agency under NEPA. The Department is the lead agency under CEQA. The document tells you why the project is being proposed, what alternatives we have considered for the project, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read the document.
- Additional copies of it, as well as the technical studies we relied on in preparing it, are available for review at:

California Department of Transportation, District 8 464 West 4 th Street, 6 th Floor San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400	Riverside County Transportation Commission 4080 Lemon Street, 3 rd Floor Riverside, CA 92501	Paloma Valley Branch Library 31375 Bradley Road Menifee, CA 92584	Cesar E. Chavez Library 163 E. San Jacinto Perris, CA 92570
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- We'd like to hear what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to the Department by the deadline.
 - Submit comments via postal mail to:
Senior Environmental Planner, Environmental Branch Chief, Attention: Russell Williams
Department of Transportation, Environmental Studies A
464 West 4th Street, 6th Floor, MS-823
San Bernardino, California 92401-1400
 - Submit comments via email to: Russell_Williams@dot.ca.gov. Please use "I-215 Widening Project" in the subject line of the email.
- Be sure to submit comments by the deadline: November 10, 2010

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, the Department, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, may: (1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, (2) do additional environmental studies, or (3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, the Department could design and construct all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to the California Department of Transportation, Attn: Russell Williams, Environmental Studies A, 464 West 4th Street, MS-823, San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400; call (909) 388-1387; or use the California Relay Service, at 1 (909) 383-6300 (TTY).

It should be noted that at a future date FHWA or another federal agency may publish a notice in the Federal Register (FR), pursuant to 23 USC Section 139(l), indicating that a final action has been taken on this project by FHWA or another federal agency. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Section 6002 establishes a 180-day statute of limitations (SOL) on claims against FHWA or another federal agency for certain environmental and other approval actions if certain circumstances apply (23 Code of Federal Regulations 771.139). The action must be related to a transportation project (as defined in SAFETEA-LU) and a SOL Notice must be published in the FR announcing that a Federal agency has taken an action on a transportation project. If a SOL notice is not published in the FR, the normal six-year period for claims applies.

FHWA Highway ID No.

SCH#
08-RIV-215-PM 14.2/28.5
0F1620

Widen Interstate 215 (I-215) from Scott Road to Nuevo Road in Riverside County, California. The project extends from post mile 14.2 to post mile 28.5, including transition striping areas and the limits for the installation of construction signage.

**INITIAL STUDY [with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration]/
Environmental Assessment**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

10/14/10
Date of Approval


David Bricker
Deputy District Director
District 8 Division of Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation

CEQA/NEPA Lead Agency

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (the Department), in cooperation with the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), proposes to widen Interstate 215 (I-215) from Scott Road to Nuevo Road in Riverside County, California. For the proposed project, I-215 would be widened from two to three lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions by adding a third mixed-flow lane. The total length of the project is approximately 14.3 miles (post mile 14.2 to 28.5), including transition striping areas and the limits for the installation of construction signage.

Determination

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is the Department's intent to adopt an MND for this project. This does not mean that the Department's decision regarding the project is final. This MND is subject to modification based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

The Department has prepared an Initial Study for this project, and pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons.

The proposed project would have no effect on existing and future land use; consistency with state, regional, and local plans; parks and recreational facilities; growth; farmland; environmental justice; population and housing; hydrology; and floodplains.

In addition, the proposed project would have no significant effect on community character and cohesion, relocations, utilities and emergency services, traffic and transportation, visual resources, cultural resources, water quality and stormwater runoff, geology, soils, seismicity and topography, paleontological resources, hazardous waste/materials, air quality, noise, and invasive species.

The proposed project would have no significant adverse effect on biological resources or state streambeds and federal waters because the following mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to insignificance:

BIO-15 A DBESP report will be provided that provides analysis of direct and indirect impacts, avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation, along with the functions and values of the resources being impacted as it relates to MSHCP Covered species. Refer to Appendix F of the NES report for this proposed project.

BIO-16 Compensation for impacts to riparian-riverine resources at a 2:1 (thus 4.46 acres of mitigation) using **BIO-17**. This should be coordinated with CWA permitting and DFG 1602

Streambed Alteration Agreement acquisition to ensure efficiencies with the mitigation effort. The temporary impacts are to be replaced at their current locations.

BIO-17 (may be a Compensatory Mitigation option) Purchase mitigation bank credits through the Riverside Corona Resources Conservation District In Lieu Fee program and/or remove giant reed (*Arundo donax*) through the Mission Resource Conservation District's In Lieu Fee Program.

BIO-18 Compensation for impacts to vernal pools at a 5:1 ratio (thus 1.20 acres of mitigation) and would either consist of off-site land acquisition (with vernal pools) that would be provided to Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) for long-term conservation and management or creation of alkali vernal pools that would be provided to RCA for long-term conservation, or a combination there of.

BIO-22 Ensure that a dry crossing for mammals underneath the San Jacinto River bridge is present year-round.

BIO-24 The compensation ratio for Smooth Tarplant will be 2:1 (0.16 acres of mitigation) and can be in the form of off-site land purchase, purchase of mitigation bank credits, and/or off-site restoration. At the time of this report, no mitigation bank was known to provide mitigation credits for Smooth Tarplant. However, any lands purchased for San Jacinto Valley Crownscale and for vernal pool mitigation should either include Smooth Tarplant or have the necessary requirements for Smooth Tarplant restoration.

BIO-29 Replacement of impacted lands occupied by San Jacinto Valley Crownscale at a ratio of 3:1 (thus 0.18 acres of mitigation). Mitigation can be in the form of off-site land purchase and/or creation of occupied habitat that would be provided to RCA for long-term conservation and management and/or purchase of mitigation bank credits. At the time of this report, no mitigation bank was found to have San Jacinto Valley Crownscale.

David Bricker
Deputy District Director
District 8 Division of Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation

Date

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Appendices

Appendix A CEQA Checklist

Appendix B Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f)

Appendix C Title VI Policy Statement

Appendix D Environmental Commitments Record

Appendix E List of Acronyms

Appendix F List of Technical Studies

Appendix G Regional Species and Habitats of Concern

Appendix H Farmland Maps

Appendix I Land Use Maps

**Appendix J I-15/I-215 PSR/PDS Traffic Forecasts (Appendix A of the Traffic
Technical Report)**

Appendix K Adopted 2008 RTIP

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