Project Name: Yolo 80 Corridor Improvements Project
DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 04-SOL-80-40.7/R44.7; 03-YOL-80-0.00/R11.72; 03-YOL-50-0.00/3.12; 03-SAC-50-0.00/L0.617; 03-SAC-80-M0.00/M1.36
EA: 03-3H900
EFIS ID: 0318000085
SCH# 2021060117

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS

For

YOLO 80 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT IMPROVEMENTS CONSISTING OF A HIGH OCCUPANCY TOLL (HOT) 3+ LANE IN EACH DIRECTION WITH DIRECT CONNECTORS, PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE FACILITIES, PARK-N-RIDE, AND INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (ITS) ELEMENTS ON I-80 BETWEEN POST MILE (PMs) 40.7 AND R44.7 IN SOLANO COUNTY, BETWEEN PM 0.00 AND R11.72 IN YOLO COUNTY, AND BETWEEN PM 0.00 AND M1.36 IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY; ON THE US-50 CORRIDOR BETWEEN PM 0.00 AND 3.12 IN YOLO COUNTY AND BETWEEN PM 0.00 AND L0.617 IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY.

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15091) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). 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 the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Special-Status Animal Species

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project would result in direct and indirect impacts to the following federally- and state-listed species:

> Valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB): 6 elderberry shrubs directly affected, and 28 elderberry shrubs indirectly affected.
>
> Giant garter snake (GGS): Approximately 4.265 acres of habitat would be permanently affected and approximately 3.669 acres of temporarily affected.
>
> Western pond turtle: The project would have temporary effects on breeding and nesting activities within or near construction areas.
>
> Burrowing owl: The project would have temporary effects on nesting habitat within or near construction areas, including 0.03 acre of concentrated burrows.
>
> Swainson's hawk (SWHA): The project would have temporary effects on foraging and nesting habitat within or near construction areas, and could result in stress, injury, or mortality to individuals during construction. Approximately 10 acres of Swainson's hawk foraging habitat would be permanently affected.
>
> Yellow-headed blackbird and tricolored blackbird: The project would have temporary effects on nesting habitat within or near construction areas.

Tree and vegetation removal would result in a temporary loss of nesting and foraging habitat for raptors, nesting birds, and migratory birds, including grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian habitats.

The project would also result in temporary displacement of bats and temporary loss of bat roosting habitat for locations where culvert removal and tree trimming/removal would occur. If culvert work or tree removal would take place during the reproductive season (early May to August), there is a potential for direct mortality of young bats to occur.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measures have been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts on special-status species. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Western Pond Turtle (cease work)
- Pre-Construction Tricolored Blackbird and Yellow-Headed Blackbird Surveys
- Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan
- Burrowing Owl Direct Disturbance
- White-Tailed Kite Consultation
- White-Tailed Kite Avoidance
- VELB Avoidance Area
- VELB Timing (for construction activities)
- Erosion Control and Re-Vegetation
- Elderberry Shrub Transplanting
- Compensation for Loss of VELB Habitat
- GGS Timing (for construction activities)
- GGS Exclusionary Fencing (during construction)
- GGS Escape Ramp (during construction period)
- Compensation for Loss of GGS Habitat
- SWHA Agency Consultation

Wildlife Corridors and Wildlife Movement

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project would result in temporary displacement of bats and temporary loss of potential bat roosting habitat for locations where culvert removal and tree trimming/removal would occur. If culvert work or tree removal would take place during the reproductive season (early May to August), there is a potential for direct mortality of young bats to occur. Permanent impacts could occur from bat mortality resulting from the removal of maternity roost habitat. No construction would occur on the existing bridge over the Yolo Bypass, so the maternity colony that roosts under the bridge would not be directly impacted. Temporary impacts on bats would result from construction related noise, lights during night work, and vibration disturbance to bats roosting adjacent to active construction. These impacts have the potential to impact the bats by disturbing their behavior, growth, reproduction, or survival.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measures have been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts on special-status bat species. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Tree Removal
- Preconstruction Bat Surveys
- Bat Protection Plan
- Structural Changes to Bat Roosting Habitat

Conflict With Provisions of An Adopted Plan

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project is located within the boundaries of the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP). There is a Solano Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan that is under development but not yet finalized.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measures have been determined to be feasible and, therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts related to potential conflicts with an adopted HCP/NCCP. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Western Pond Turtle (cease work)
- Pre-Construction Tricolored Blackbird and Yellow-Headed Blackbird Surveys
- Burrowing Owl Exclusion Plan
- Burrowing Owl Direct Disturbance
- White-Tailed Kite Consultation

- White-Tailed Kite Avoidance
- Tree Removal
- Preconstruction Bat Surveys
- Bat Protection Plan
- Structural Changes to Bat Roosting Habitat
- VELB Avoidance Area
- VELB Timing (for construction activities)
- Elderberry Shrub Transplanting
- Compensation for Loss of VELB Habitat
- GGS Timing (for construction activities)
- GGS Exclusionary Fencing (during construction)
- GGS Escape Ramp (during construction period)
- Compensation for Loss of GGS Habitat
- SWHA Agency Consultation

ENERGY

Energy Consumption

Adverse Environmental Effect:

The project would result in short-term energy consumption related to related to manufacturing of construction materials, the use of construction equipment that requires petroleum fuels, and the use of construction workers' motor vehicles as they travel to and from the site. Indirect energy consumption would result from traffic delays due to construction.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measure has been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts on energy consumption. The full text of the measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Prepare a Construction Energy Efficiency Plan

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Seismic-Related Ground Failure

Adverse Environmental Effect:

There is low potential for seismic activity to occur during construction due to the distance from active faults project. However, seismic shaking creates opportunities for liquefaction, which could impact construction workers during construction, or result in safety issues to people and structures because of soil erosion, subsidence, expansive soils, corrosive soils, surface fault rupture, seismic shaking, liquefaction, and landslides.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measure have been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts due to seismic-related ground failure. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Prepare Geotechnical Design Reports

Unstable Geologic Unit or Soils

Adverse Environmental Effect:

The project is not in an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone or in an area that has historically been prone to landslides, lateral spreading, or subsidence. However, soil characteristics and shallow groundwater within the project area contribute to the potential for liquefaction.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measure has been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts related to unstable geologic unit or soils. The full text of the measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Prepare Geotechnical Design Reports

PALEONTOLOGY

Unique Paleontological Resource or Site, Or Unique Geologic Feature

Adverse Environmental Effect:

Significant fossil discoveries have occurred in formations in the immediate vicinity of the project boundary. While the discoveries were not found at the surface directly beneath the project activities, the depth of excavation required for structures work increases the risk of encountering these formations.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measures have been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts on paleontological resources. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Prepare Paleontological Evaluation Report
- Prepare Paleontological Resources Management Plan
- Conduct Paleontological Resources Monitoring (during construction)

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Wildland Fire Prevention

Adverse Environmental Effect:

Project construction would involve the use of hazardous materials including fuels such as gasoline or diesel, hydraulic oils, paints, solvents, or other industrial chemicals necessary for maintaining vehicles and equipment. Said material can be flammable.

Once project construction is completed, the roadway corridor would continue to serve the same use as existing conditions and would not create a new roadway alignment within a high fire severity zone. Measure will be taken to lessen the wildfire risk of the project.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measure has been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts related to wildland fire hazards. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- During The Construction, Caltrans will Implement Fire Prevention Practices to Reduce the Potential for Wildfire.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Alteration Of Drainage Patterns, Increased Runoff and Flooding, Exceed Capacity of Stormwater Drainage Systems, Additional Polluted Runoff

Adverse Environmental Effect:

Construction of the project would involve land-disturbing activities, use of construction equipment, clearing and grading, excavation, and temporary staging of materials. As a result, during construction, the project would potentially result in changes in topography or ground surface features; an increase in wind or water erosion of on-site or off-site soils, resulting in changes to soil deposition and/or erosion; and the discharge of storm water runoff and pollutants which have the potential to affect water quality in Putah Creek, Willow Slough Bypass, Sacramento River, and Delta Waterways.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following measure has been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts on drainage and runoff. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Culvert Replacement Best Management Practices and Construction Monitoring

NOISE

Temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in excess of applicable standards.

Adverse Environmental Effect:

Construction activities (e.g., heavy construction equipment, heavy-duty trucks) would result in temporary increases to noise levels at adjacent sensitive receptors. Noise levels would not exceed quantitative noise limits established by Caltrans except for nighttime work, which could result in an exceedance.

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/EA.

Statement of Facts

The following mitigation measure has been determined to be feasible and therefore, will be adopted to avoid, minimize, and fully mitigate project impacts related to construction noise. The full text of each measure is included in the Final EIR/EA.

- Restrict Nighttime Noise-Generating Construction Activities

FINDINGS REGARDING SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

TRANSPORTATION

Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)

Adverse Environmental Effect:

As discussed in the Final EIR/EA, although the project would result in improved vehicular operational conditions that would result in reduced vehicular delays and congestion within the project corridor; however, the project would also result in induced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (Section 2.2.10.7, Table 2.1-26), which represents a significant impact.

Findings

Feasible mitigation measures will not reduce the identified significant impact to a level below significant. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. 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/EA. However, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081(b), see Statement of Overriding Considerations for the specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project that outweigh this significant and unavoidable impact.

Statement of Facts

The I-80 and US-50 corridors experience high travel demand, especially during peak commute periods and weekends. This demand has created severe traffic congestion and impaired mobility along the route. Congestion at various locations, specifically I-80 through Davis and along the Yolo Bypass Causeway between Davis and West Sacramento, can be especially severe and is caused by a combination of high demand and bottleneck design. Traffic congestion along the I-80 and US-50 within the project limits has impacted public transit headway times and reliability, especially during peak commute periods which are critical times for ridership. Additionally, heavy congestion and stop and go conditions, has impacted movement of freight and commute times.

The purpose of this project is to improve multimodal mobility on I-80 and US-50 in Yolo and Sacramento Counties. This project will decrease congestion through the corridor and the effects congestion has on transit and freight. It will improve transit headway times, reliability, access, and viability through the corridor. This project will also increase freight and people throughput via congestion reduction. The project will also address non-recurrent congestion caused by incidents, including collisions, by improving incident detection, verification, response and clearing and the addition of intelligent transportation systems will provide safer travel for motorists.

This project is being approved despite the above referenced transportation impact not being fully mitigable. The project was unable to mitigate for the full amount of additional VMT (approximately 110 million annually) due to various factors related to infeasibility. The feasibility factors used for evaluation included reasonable cost-to-VMT benefit ratios; whether specific measures were included in a local agency planning document; whether the measure is within the realm of responsibility of another public agency or jurisdiction; inclusion in Sacramento Area Council of Governments Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy which would rule out the ability to claim VMT reduction credit; or whether the Yolo 80 project's proposed financial contribution would be sufficient enough to make a reasonable and feasible claim for full VMT credit.

After a thorough solicitation process with local agencies and stakeholders to provide a list of potential VMT reducing measures, analysis was conducted using the above listed feasibility factors on each potential mitigation measure. This yielded a VMT reduction of

50 percent for the preferred alternative. By incorporating the VMT mitigation measures, the project will be able to mitigate 55,601,500 annual VMT. VMT mitigation will be funded with the project's mitigation budget of $55 million. Despite the high VMT generated, the project will provide multi-modal benefits to not only users of the state highway system but also to the surrounding communities. The proposed project benefits outweigh the unavoidable VMT adverse impacts.

Pursuant to Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines, decision-makers are required to balance the benefits of a project against its unavoidable environmental risks in determining whether to approve a project. The Project will increase person throughput, improve merge/diverge and short weaving by constructing auxiliary lanes at interchanges used by Port of West Sacramento freight users (thereby improving freeway mainline operations, freight reliability, freight economic competitiveness and efficiency).

To the extent the significant effects of the project are not avoided or substantially lessened to a level of insignificance, Caltrans, having reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR for the Yolo 80 Corridor Improvements Project (EA 03-3H900), and having reviewed and considered the information contained in the public record, and having balanced the benefits of the project against the unavoidable effects which remain, finds that such unmitigated effects to be acceptable in consideration of the overriding considerations.

- Reduce Induced VMT Effects of The Project by Contributing Funding to Regional VMT Reducing Measures

Suzanne Melim	Suzanne Melim	April 30, 2024
Chief, North Region Environmental California Department of Transportation	Signature	Date