



**Project Name:** Delano to Pixley 6-lane with Pavement Rehabilitation  
**District-County-Route-Post Mile:** 06-KER-56.4/57.6; 06-TUL-0.0/13.5  
**Expenditure Authorization Number:** 06-0W790/06-0W791  
**EFIS ID Number:** 0617000307/0621000142

## **California Department of Transportation Findings**

**For**

### **REHABILITATE PAVEMENT AND CONSTRUCT AN ADDITIONAL NORTHBOUND AND SOUTHBOUND LANE ON STATE ROUTE 99 FROM DELANO TO PIXLEY IN KERN AND TULARE COUNTIES**

The following information is presented to comply with State California Environmental Quality Act 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 Environmental Impact Report as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

#### **Vehicle Miles Traveled**

##### **Adverse Environmental Effect**

Senate Bill 743 required changes to the guidelines implementing CEQA with using vehicle miles traveled as the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project's transportation impacts. The project will induce vehicle miles traveled by 47,706,213.

##### **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**

Mitigation measures to address Vehicle Miles Traveled impacts have been incorporated into the project. The measures would be implemented to address impacts associated with increasing capacity on State Route 99 within the project limits.

Section 2.1.7 of the FEIR, Vehicle Miles Traveled mitigation can be achieved through modification of the project to reduce the amount of Vehicle Miles Traveled generated or by providing transportation improvements on-system or off-system.

The following mitigation will be incorporated into the project using Cooperative Agreements with local partners and collaboration with local agencies.

*Tulare County Regional Transit Agency Vanpool Program*

Caltrans will provide funding in the amount of \$360,000 to subsidize the vanpool program at the Tulare County Regional Transit Agency for a two-year period. Caltrans funding will subsidize the addition of 30 vanpools to the existing program in the first year and 15 vanpools to the program in the second year.

*Kings County Regional Transit Agency Vanpool Program*

Caltrans will provide funding in the amount of \$252,000 to subsidize expansion of the vanpool program at the Kings County Regional Transit Agency for a two-year period.

*Increased Frequency on Kings Area Regional Transit (KART) Route 15*

Caltrans will provide 20 years of funding in the amount of \$2,885,000 to subsidize the roundtrip bus service for Route 15 at Kings Area Regional Transit. Route 15 currently operates three trips per day between Hanford and Visalia. Caltrans proposes to subsidize one additional trip during the weekday, which will bring the roundtrip bus service to four trips per day during the weekday, and two additional trips per day on Saturday and Sunday.

*Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan*

Caltrans Districts 6, 10, and 3 will collaborate with local agencies in the San Joaquin Valley to prepare a Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan for State Route 99 through the Valley. The Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan will include the prioritization of identifying managed-lane and mode shift opportunities in the corridor that will lead to reduced VMT. Implementation of a VMT-reducing managed lane strategy through the corridor (or parts of the corridor that include this project) could eliminate about 80 percent of the VMT concern from the project because the only relevant capacity increase will result from the removal of trucks from the two general-purpose lanes. Since the draft environmental document, the VMT-reducing managed lane strategy has been identified as the preferred strategy to reduce significant VMT impacts. A project to establish a VMT-reducing managed lane will be programmed prior to project construction closeout in 2026.

Before the start of the SP&R contract, Caltrans District 6 has done preliminary work toward the investigation and implementation of a managed lane in the project vicinity. Preliminary work includes:

- Review of the California Vehicle Code regarding converting existing general-purpose lanes to managed lanes, such as truck-only lanes.
- Coordination with district management to identify and prepare a project delivery schedule for a State Highway Operation and Protection Program project to be initiated for a VMT-reducing managed lane project.

The California Vehicle Code does not prevent the reallocation of a general-purpose lane to a managed lane using changes to signage and striping. Vehicle Code 21655 gives the Department of Transportation the authority to designate preferential highway lanes, allows the Department of Transportation to provide instructions to motorists on the use of those lanes, and states that a driver cannot drive on those lanes unless they follow the Department of Transportation's instructions. The rules allow the Department of Transportation to mark vehicle lanes as truck lanes. The California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Section 2B.31) should be used for sign guidance, and changes in the California Vehicle Code may be needed for enforcement.

Below is a proposed schedule for a VMT-reducing managed lane project. Two assumptions have been made in the development of the proposed schedule and are listed below.

- 1.) The project will mainly be signage and delineation for lane conversion.
- 2.) Approval will be granted to amend the project into the 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program.

The proposed schedule is as follows:

- VMT-reducing managed lane strategy will be provided to Asset Management in June 2024
- Asset Management will add the mitigation project to the Ten-Year Project Book in July 2024
- K-phase will open for a VMT-reducing managed lane project, and work will commence on the Project Initiation Document in November 2024
- Project Initiation Document will be completed in May 2025
- Project will be amended into the 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program in August 2025
- Project Approval and Environmental Document phase will begin in September 2025
- VMT-reducing managed lane project will be ready to list for advertisement in the fiscal year 2026/2027 or 2027/2028 and will be funded in the 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program.

A preliminary traffic operational analysis was performed for a segment of State Route 99 within the limits of the Delano to Pixley 6-Lane with Pavement Rehabilitation project. The analysis showed that the facility would operate at an acceptable Level of Service with the implementation of a truck-only lane. The analysis assumed an existing condition that included the improvements from the Delano to Pixley 6-Lane with Pavement Rehabilitation project to be completed by 2027. The project proposes to widen the existing 4-lane freeway to a 6-lane facility on State Route 99 from post mile 56.4 in Kern County to post mile 13.5 in Tulare County.

The segment of the Delano to Pixley 6-Lane with Pavement Rehabilitation project with the highest forecast volumes was selected for this preliminary analysis. Level of Service analysis was used to describe operational conditions and forecasted weekday peak hour traffic volumes for the Year 2047 conditions were used. Highway Capacity Software was used to analyze the Level of Service for freeway segments. The results indicate that before the implementation of truck-only lanes, the Level of Service with three mixed-flow lanes would be 'C.' After the

implementation of a truck-only lane, the Level of Service in the two mixed-flow lanes and the single truck-only lane would be 'C' and 'D,' respectively.

The California Statewide Travel Demand Model will be used as a tool in the assessment of operations and VMT reducing strategies on an interregional and statewide basis. Preliminary work has been done to modify the transportation network used by the California Statewide Travel Demand Model. The 2050 base Travel Demand Model network was used to create a network with managed lanes on State Route 99 across District 6. This updated network includes parallel segments to all the segments across the district with coding that reflects a managed lane. The parallel segments connect to all the nodes of the existing 2050 network. This work has been done in collaboration with the California Department of Transportation Statewide Modeling Branch in the Division of Transportation Planning, Office of Data Analytics Services.

Caltrans will implement mitigation in the form of a VMT-reducing managed lane strategy that has the potential to fully mitigate induced VMT. The District will program a VMT-reducing managed lane project prior to project construction closeout in 2026. The VMT reducing managed lane project will be based on the Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan currently being completed. A Statement of Overriding Considerations has been prepared to document the mitigation strategy described above.

Diana Gomez

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District Director



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Signature

9/11/2023

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Date