

Interstate 5/El Toro Road Interchange Project

ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
DISTRICT 12 – ORA – 5 (PM 17.8/19.7)
EA 0M980/EFIS 1213000084

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 actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.



April 2019

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General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 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 Orange County, California. Caltrans is the lead agency under both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The document tells you why the project is being proposed, what alternatives have been considered for the project, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts for each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read this document.
- Additional copies of this document and related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans District 12 office, located at 1750 East 4th Street, Suite 100, Santa Ana, CA 92705. The document is also available for review at the following locations during normal business hours:
 - Laguna Woods Library Laguna Woods City Hall, 24264 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92637
 - El Toro Library, 24672 Raymond Way, Lake Forest, CA 92630
 - Laguna Hills Technology Library, 25555 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills, CA 92653
- Additionally, this document can be downloaded at the following website:
<http://dot.ca.gov/d12/DEA/5/0M980>
- Attend the Public Hearing (open house format) from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, 2019, at Holiday Inn, 23131 Lake Center Drive, Lake Forest, CA 92630
- We'd like to hear what you think. If you have any comments about the proposed project, please attend the Public Hearing (open house format) and/or send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline.
- Send comments via postal mail to:
Caltrans District 12, Division of Environmental Analysis
1750 East 4th Street, Suite 100
Santa Ana, California 92705
Attn: Gabriela Duran
- Send comments via email to:
D12.ELTORO@dot.ca.gov
- Be sure to send comments by the deadline: May 3, 2019

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, Caltrans, as assigned by FHWA, 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 obtained, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans District 12, Division of Environmental Analysis, 1750 East 4th Street, Suite 100, Santa Ana, California 92705, Attn: Gabriela Duran; (657) 328-6157 Voice, or use the California Relay Service, 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1 (800) 735-2922 (voice), or 711.

Improve the Interstate 5 (I-5)/El Toro Road Interchange on I-5 between Post Miles 17.8 to 19.7 in the north-south direction and on El Toro Road from Rockfield Boulevard to Paseo De Valencia in the east-west direction, traversing the cities of Laguna Hills, Lake Forest, and Laguna Woods in Orange County, California


**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), 49 USC 303, and/or 23 USC 138

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Responsible Agencies:
Orange County Transportation Authority
and
California Transportation Commission

March 27, 2019
Date


Chris Flynn
Deputy District Director
California Department of Transportation
NEPA and CEQA Lead Agency

The following person may be contacted for more information about this document:

Gabriela Duran, Associate Environmental Planner
California Department of Transportation, District 12
Division of Environmental Analysis
1750 East 4th Street, Suite 100
Santa Ana, California 92705
(657) 328-6157

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PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 12, in partnership with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), proposes to modify and improve the existing Interstate 5 (I-5)/El Toro Road Interchange in the cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest in Orange County, California. The project limits extend from I-5 Post Mile 17.8 to Post Mile 19.7 in the north-south direction and includes El Toro Road from Rockfield Boulevard to Paseo De Valencia in the east-west direction.

Determination

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

Caltrans 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 agriculture and forest resources, mineral resources, population and housing, tribal cultural resources, and wildfires.

In addition, the proposed project would have a less than significant effect on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, hydrology/water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, recreation, hazards and hazardous materials, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems, and mandatory findings of significance.

With the following mitigation measure incorporated, the proposed project would have less than significant effects on geology and soils (paleontological resources) (PAL-1).

Chris Flynn
Deputy District Director
District 12
California Department of Transportation

Date

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