

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: David A. Bobardt, Planning Director *DB*

DATE: November 6, 2008 (CC Meeting of 11/19/2008)

SUBJECT: Consider Response to Caltrans on Notice of Preparation for the Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Proposed State Route 118 Intersection Improvements at State Route 34 (Somis Road) and Donlon Road

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

On October 30, 2008, Caltrans distributed a Notice of Preparation for a Draft EIR to evaluate six alternative intersection improvements to the SR-118 highway in Somis to alleviate congestion and reduce the risk for traffic accidents in this area. The purpose of a Notice of Preparation is to allow government agencies and the public the opportunity to identify critical issues or alternatives they wish to see evaluated in the EIR. A copy of the notice is attached. Comments are due December 1, 2008.

The SR-118 intersection at Somis Road currently operates at Level of Service F during morning and afternoon peak hours, meaning that more vehicles approach the intersection at these times than it has physical capacity to accommodate. The improvement alternatives proposed, with the exception of the "no project" alternative, would alleviate this congestion to varying degrees. While the notice indicates that the Draft EIR will address impacts related to biological resources, water quality, farmland, and hazardous materials, it does not state that the EIR will analyze the impacts associated with potential increased truck traffic, as the improvements would increase the desirability of the SR-118 highway over other routes. A draft comment letter requesting that this issue be addressed in the Draft EIR is attached.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to send response letter to Caltrans as drafted.

Attachments:

1. Notice of Preparation
2. Draft Response Letter

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 7
100 MAIN STREET, SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-3606
PHONE (213) 897-0362
FAX (213) 897-0360
TTY (213) 897-4937

RECEIVED**NOV 03 2008****Public Works Department**

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Office of Planning & Research, State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812

From: California Department of Transportation, District 7, Division of
Division of Environmental Planning, 100 South Main Street, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Project Title: State Route 118 Intersection Improvements at State Route 34 (Somis Rd.)
and Donlon Road

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will be the Lead Agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the State Route 118 (SR 118)/ State Route 34 (SR 34) Intersection Improvement Project. Caltrans invites your comments as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Some state and local agencies may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or approval of certain aspects of the project.

A ND/FONSI was prepared for this project and finalized in December 1999 with State Clearinghouse number 198081078. The findings in that environmental document were challenged in a lawsuit filed against Caltrans, resulting in the court mandating that an EIR be prepared for the proposed project.

The proposed project location is in an unincorporated area of Ventura County, within the community of Somis. At this location, SR 118 is a two-lane conventional highway with no median, forming two "T" intersections with SR 34 and Donlon Rd. Coyote Canyon crosses the highway via an arch drainage culvert between the two intersections. Coyote Canyon tributary crosses SR 118 just east of Donlon Rd.

The purpose of the project is to improve mobility, achieve an acceptable level of traffic operations and improve safety conditions along State Route 118 at the intersections with SR 34 and Donlon Rd. There are six alternatives being considered for this project. Four of the alternatives would relocate and realign Donlon Rd. westerly to align with the existing SR 34. Furthermore, these four alternatives would eliminate the existing intersection of Donlon Rd. at SR 118. The remaining two alternatives consist of a No-Build alternative and an alternative that would bypass the Somis community and construct a 1 mile highway to the south to connect SR 34 to SR 118.

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CC ATTACHMENT 1**000160**

The proposed project is necessary to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce the risk for traffic accidents. Caltrans accident data for 1993-1998 shows a total accident rate higher than the statewide average at the SR 118/ SR 34 intersection when compared with similar intersections. As of 2004, the intersection operates at level of service (LOS) E. Currently, our traffic analysis reveals that demand at the intersection exceeds capacity.

The SR 118/SR 34 intersection conditions are characterized by severe congestion and low travel speeds during both the AM (6:00 – 9:00 AM) and PM (3:00 – 6:00 PM) peak periods. During these hours, vehicles making a left turn onto southbound SR 34 from westbound SR 118 back up onto the through lane. This impedes westbound traffic from continuing on SR 118. The signalized intersection used to function properly when traffic was at rural levels, but has become a bottleneck with new urban traffic demand. Also, because traffic on SR 118 and SR 34 has increased significantly, the existing “T” intersection of SR 118 with Donlon Rd. no longer functions effectively.

The proximity of both “T” intersections exacerbates the congested conditions and poses problems for motorists exiting Donlon Rd. The intersection of SR 118/Donlon Rd. is located 275 ft. east of the SR 118/ SR 34 intersection. Vehicles exiting Donlon Rd. to access SR 118 are controlled by a stop sign. Right turning vehicles at this location face a great challenge entering the left-turn pocket to southbound SR 34 due to congestion on the east-leg approach of SR 118. Left turn movements from southbound Donlon Road onto eastbound SR 118 are an even greater challenge due to the traffic backup and inadequate visibility.

Trucks turning at the intersection are also an issue of concern as these vehicles tend to encroach into the other traffic lanes due to inadequate turning radii. Subsequently, this situation generates further potential for vehicle collisions.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

The following six (6) alternatives (five build alternatives and the no-build alternative) are proposed for this project:

- **No Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative proposes to maintain the existing conditions without any alterations.

- **Intersection Alternative**

The Intersection Alternative would close the existing Donlon Rd. from SR 118 to La Cumbre Rd. The new alignment of Donlon Rd. would begin at the SR 118/34 intersection and run north along the west side of the creek up to the spillway of the Ventura County Watershed Control District debris basin. At this point, Donlon Rd. would cross over the spillway in a northeasterly direction with a bridge structure. The southbound lane for Donlon Rd. would have a mixed thru/left-turn/right-turn lane at the intersection with SR 118. The realigned northbound lane of Donlon Rd. would not change.

The Intersection Alternative would add an additional left-turn lane in the westbound direction of SR 118 (east leg), an auxiliary lane in the eastbound direction of SR 118 (east leg) and a right-turn only lane in the eastbound direction of SR 118 (west leg). An auxiliary lane would be added on the southbound direction of SR 34 and a left turn/thru lane only on the northbound direction of SR 34.

The existing drainage culvert and large catch basin (north side) for Coyote Canyon would be modified to accommodate the extra left-turn lane and auxiliary lane on SR 118 (east leg).

- **Bridge Alternative**

The Bridge Alternative proposes the same intersection improvements as the Proposed Project Alternative with the exception of the realignment of Donlon Rd. The new Donlon Rd. would be a straight alignment due north of the SR 118/SR 34 intersection and would cross Coyote Canyon via a bridge structure. Caltrans Division of Structures has estimated that a bridge structure of 156 feet by 55.5 feet would be required.

- **Roundabout Alternative**

The Roundabout Alternative would consist of a one-way, one-lane circulatory roadway in a counter-clockwise direction with a width of 24 feet. An additional structural pavement, 8 feet in width, would abut the inner radius of the roadway, which would function as a truck apron. A raised curbed would border the inner radius of the truck apron and delineate the central island. The roundabout would replace the existing signalized intersection.

The east-leg approach of SR 118 would consist of a four-lane roadway (two lanes for ingress and two lanes for egress). The west-leg approach of SR 118 would consist of a three-lane roadway (two lanes for ingress and one lane for egress). The south-leg approach of SR 34 would consist of a three-lane roadway similar to the west-leg approach of SR 118. The realigned Donlon Rd. would travel north over the outlet of the debris basin with a two-lane roadway (one lane for ingress and one lane for egress).

- **Somis Bypass Alternative**

The Somis Bypass Alternative was presented by local residents of the Somis community. This alternative would attempt to alleviate truck and commuter traffic going through this community by constructing a new two-lane highway. The proposed roadway would start at the present Union Pacific railroad crossing with SR 118 on the east side of Somis, continuing south parallel to the railroad alignment and connecting to SR 34 at a point south of the community of Somis.

- **SOS Alternative**

JR Consulting Engineers, LLC, was retained by the Save Our Somis (SOS) community organization and proposed a smaller intersection design for the project. This design would be similar to the Proposed Project Alternative with the following exceptions:

- only one left-turn lane for the westbound direction of SR 118, lengthened to almost 350 feet,
- the east leg of SR 118 would not have an eastbound auxiliary lane and
- no auxiliary lane for the southbound direction of SR 34.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Biological Resources

- Removal of Eucalyptus trees (habitat for Raptors & migrating Monarch butterflies)
- Impact to wetlands
- Resource permits

Water Quality

- Increase in storm water runoff into Coyote Canyon and other water related resources that constitute the Calleguas Creek Watershed.

Farmland

- Acquisition of farmland

Hazardous Materials

- Pesticides, PCB's and herbicides associated with agricultural activities in surficial soil.
- Lead in soil

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Following completion of the 30 day Notice of Preparation public review period, Caltrans will incorporate relevant information into the EIR, if and where appropriate and consistent with the limitations of the court's judgment in the action. Subsequently, a draft EIR will be prepared and circulated for public review and comment for the 45-day public review period. All individuals that have requested so will be placed on a Notice of Availability list for the draft EIR. There is no scoping meeting scheduled at this time.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Comments are due **December 1, 2008**.

Please send your comments regarding the forthcoming EIR by regular mail or fax to:

Ron Kosinski
Deputy District Director
Caltrans, Division of Environmental Planning
100 South Main Street, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90012

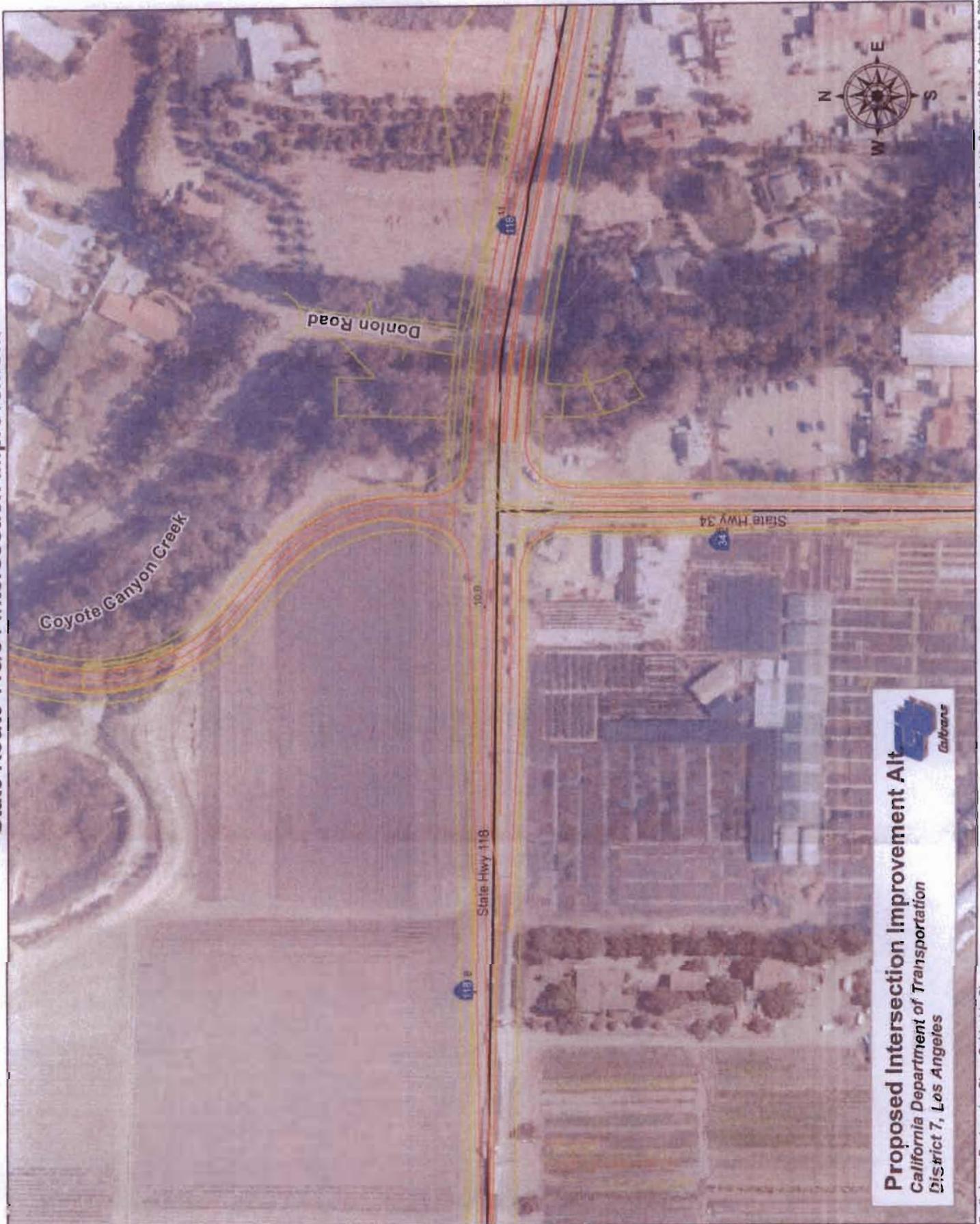
Fax: (213) 897-0685

Date: Oct 30, 2008

Signature



State Route 118/34 Intersection Improvement



Proposed Intersection Improvement Alt
California Department of Transportation
District 7, Los Angeles



Map Created by Cesar and Robert, October 29, 2008

*Preliminary Engineering Plans Subject to Change

State Route 118/34 Intersection Improvement



Proposed Roundabout Alternative*
California Department of Transportation
District 7, Los Angeles



*Preliminary Engineering Plans Subject to Change

Map Created by Cesar and Robert, October 29, 2008

State Route 118/34 Intersection Improvement



Proposed Bridge Alternative
California Department of Transportation
District 7, Los Angeles



State Route 118/34 Intersection Improvement



Proposed Somis Bypass
California Department of Transportation
District 7, Los Angeles



*Preliminary Engineering Plans. Subject to Change

Map Created by Cesar and Robert, October 29, 2008

State Route 118/34 Intersection Improvement



Proposed SOS Alternative
California Department of Transportation
District 7, Los Angeles



*Preliminary Engineering Plans Subject to Change

Map Created by Cesar and Robert, October 26, 2008



City of Moorpark

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT: PLANNING – BUILDING AND SAFETY – CODE COMPLIANCE

799 Moorpark Avenue, Moorpark, California 93021 (805) 517-6200 fax (805) 532-2540

DRAFT

November __, 2008

Ron Kosinski
Deputy District Director
Caltrans, Division of Environmental Planning
100 South Main Street, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski,

RE: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the State Route 118 Intersection Improvements at State Route 34 (Somis Road) and Donlon Road

Thank you for requesting input on the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Report that Caltrans will be preparing for the proposed improvement alternatives to the SR-118 intersections at Somis and Donlon Roads. The City recognizes that these improvement alternatives, with the exception of the "no project" alternative, would alleviate to varying degrees severely congested conditions to the SR-118 in Somis during the morning and afternoon peak traffic periods. These improvements, however, could also increase the desirability of the SR-118 as a truck route. The City of Moorpark is requesting that the Environmental Impact Report include analysis and mitigation of the expected increase to truck traffic and related air quality, noise and safety impacts on the SR-118 (Los Angeles Avenue) through Moorpark from each of the proposed improvement alternatives. Please include me as your contact for the City of Moorpark on this project.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

David A. Bobardt
Planning Director

C: Honorable City Council
Honorable Planning Commission
Honorable Peter C. Foy, Chair, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Steven Kueny, City Manager
Barry K. Hogan, Deputy City Manager
Yugal Lall, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Darren Kettle, Executive Director, Ventura County Transportation Commission
File
Chron

CC ATTACHMENT 2

PATRICK HUNTER
Mayor

JANICE PARVIN
Mayor Pro Tem

ROSEANN MIKOS
Councilmember

KEITH F. MILLHOUSE
Councilmember

MARK VAN DAM
Councilmember

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