

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: October 19-20, 2016
Reference No: 2.3a.(2)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Timothy Craggs, Chief
Division of Design

Subject: **NOTICE OF INTENT TO CONSIDER RESCINDING FREEWAY ADOPTION
11-SD-54 PM 6.7/16.9
RESOLUTION NIU 16-02**

RECOMMENDATION:

Submitted for transmittal to the California Transportation Commission (Commission) is the Notice of Intent to Consider Rescinding Freeway Adoption Resolution NIU 16-02. The Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission approve Resolution NIU 16-02 to initiate recycling procedures to consider rescinding a portion of the freeway adoption for State Highway Route 54 (SR-54) in the County of San Diego from Post Mile (PM) 6.7 to 16.9 in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer.

This report describes the current status of the unconstructed freeway/expressway and support from local agencies to rescind the freeway adoption for this portion of SR-54. The procedures for recycling, notifying the public of the Commission's intention to consider rescinding a freeway route adoption, and disposing of acquired right-of-way were established by the Commission in Resolution No. G-15, adopted on November 17, 1978, and amended on February 29, 1980. According to the Resolution, the recycling process cannot be initiated without consent from the Commission. With the Commission's approval of Resolution NIU 16-02, the Department will notify all affected local, regional, and State agencies of the rescission proposal, and ask the agencies for any additional pertinent information that might be helpful to the Commission in making a final decision.

Recommended by: KARLA SUTLIFF
Chief Engineer

BACKGROUND

SR-54 is a major east-west facility serving an urban area within the southwest region of San Diego County. Legislative Route 54 (formerly Legislative Route 280) was created as part of the California Freeway and Expressway System in 1959. The route primarily serves intraregional traffic, providing access to National City, Chula Vista, Bonita, Spring Valley, Rancho San Diego, and El Cajon. There are no local or regional studies contemplating building the unconstructed portion of SR-54 between SR-125 and I-8. The County of San Diego has deleted unconstructed expressway/freeway alignment from their GP2020 General Plan Circulation Element with the support of both Spring Valley and Valle de Oro communities. Consequently, the Department is proposing to rescind the unconstructed, freeway/expressway from SR-125 to I-8, adopted August 20, 1963. Once the route rescission is approved, the Department's responsibility is to dispose of the excess land.

SR-54 is comprised of two separate alignments (see Rescission Map).

The first alignment comprise of two constructed, State owned and operated segments, Segments 1 and 2, and an unconstructed segment, Segment 3. Segment 1 is the 2.3 mile long section from Interstate 5 (I-5) to 0.4 mile east of Interstate 805 (I-805) and Segment 2 is the 4.4 mile long section from 0.4 mile east of I-805 to State Route 125 (SR-125). Both Segments 1 and 2 are classified as a six-lane divided freeway. Segment 3 was never constructed and spans from SR-125 to Interstate 8 (I-8) near 3rd Street. This 10.2 mile long unconstructed portion of SR-54 is part of County Route 17 (S17) with the street name of Jamacha Boulevard.

The second alignment (Segment 3SA) is a three-mile State owned and operated conventional highway (PM T11.0 to T14.2) from SR-94 to the southern city limits of El Cajon. In 1999, the State relinquished a portion (PM T14.2 to T16.3) of the second alignment, from southern city limits of the City of El Cajon to the intersection of I-8 near 2nd Street.

It has been determined that construction of Segment 3 is no longer deemed necessary and has been removed from the Regional Transportation Plan. Furthermore, the SR-54 East Corridor Study, developed by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) in 2005 states: "the planned improvements in the County of San Diego and the City of El Cajon circulation elements are adequate to handle the study area traffic in the horizon year of 2030. A new expressway or freeway is not warranted." There is no need to improve adjacent facilities, as they are adequate for handling existing and projected future traffic volumes.

The portion of SR-54 to be deleted from the State Highway System is the adopted, unconstructed, freeway/expressway alignment from SR-125 to the intersection with I-8 (Segment 3). Between SR-125 and SR-94, Segment 3 is mostly parallel with the existing Jamacha Boulevard/County Route S17. Segment 3 north of SR-94 is west of Jamacha Road until Washington Avenue in the City of El Cajon. From Washington Ave to I-8, Segment 3 is parallel to 3rd Avenue east of Jamacha Road. Note that the portion of existing Conventional Highway SR-54 (Jamacha Road) between SR-94 and the southern city limits of the City of El Cajon (Segment 3SA) is not proposed for deletion. However, the Department is planning to relinquish this portion of the route to the County of San Diego.

The federal functional classification of SR-54 from I-5 to SR-125 is "Other Principal Arterial." From 0.6 mile east of Briarwood Road to SR-94 (including the traversable highway portion from SR-125 to SR-94), the roadway is classified as "Minor Arterial". The remainder of SR-54 from SR-94 to the jurisdictional boundary of the City of El Cajon is classified as "Other Principal Arterial."

For years, the regional plan for traffic circulation in the San Diego area envisioned a system of freeway and expressways that connected with each other to form corridors and loops to provide relief to congestion and to establish alternative routes for travel between homes, jobs, shopping and other activity centers. SR-54 was intended as part of a loop bypass around downtown (reflected in its original name, the "Belt Line Freeway").

At time of adoption, SR-54 was planned as a freeway or expressway from I-5 in the South Bay to I-8 in El Cajon, forming an arc and connecting with SR-125 midway. However, the adopted and unconstructed freeway/expressway portion east of SR-125 was never built. As the years have progressed, alternative improvements to the arterial system, particularly in the County of San Diego, have been determined to be adequate for the changing nature of the land uses and projected traffic volumes in that area. In fact, the County of San Diego has widened and improved portions of Jamacha Road to serve the ultimate demand in that area. Based on the findings of SANDAG's 2005 SR-54 East Corridor Study, affected agencies and jurisdictions concluded that no regional consensus existed for continuing to plan for the unconstructed portion SR-54 as a State highway.

The October 2014 Transportation Concept Report (TCR) recommends that the unconstructed portion of the SR-54, Segment 3, be rescinded and deleted from the State highway system. Furthermore, there is a lack of community support to construct a freeway/expressway on a new alignment by extending existing SR-54 between SR-125 and I-8.

Rescission of the freeway adoption for SR-54 will allow the sale of excess lands. The unneeded right of way will make available excess land allowing for further community development, promoting economic growth and will have a positive impact for the community. If the Department retains the excess land, there will be ongoing maintenance costs, including weed abatement, public dumping, and liability concerns.

With the Commission's approval of Resolution NIU 16-02, the Department will notify all affected local and regional agencies of the rescission proposal and ask the agencies for any additional pertinent information that might be helpful to the Commission in making a final decision. The Department will also notify the State Clearinghouse so that other State agencies may be notified. Following a 60-day comment period, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled with the Commission to present the Department's recommendation for final disposition.

Attachments:

Resolution NIU 16-02
Rescission Map

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Notice of Intent to Consider Rescinding Freeway Declaration
11-SD-54 PM 6.7/16.9**

Resolution NIU 16-02

WHEREAS, a location for State Highway Route 54 was adopted and declared a freeway on August 20, 1963, in San Diego County between State Road 125 (SR-125) and Interstate 8 (I-8); and

WHEREAS, the portion the aforementioned freeway from SR-125 to I-8 is not likely to be constructed as a freeway within the foreseeable future because of lack of operational need, local support and funding; and

WHEREAS, retention of the freeway adoption may not be desirable and would subject the California Transportation Commission (Commission) to possible future expense for acquisition and maintenance of property or future expense for acquisition of property on a hardship basis; and

WHEREAS, there is excess rights of way to dispose of.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby authorize and direct the Department of Transportation to give public notice of the Commission's intention to consider rescinding the freeway adoption of State Highway Route 54 in the County of San Diego, on the portion of Route 54 from SR-125 to I-8, shown as Segment 3 on the Route 54 Rescission Map, and to give notice to local and regional agencies, and other affected State agencies, of such intention; and agencies so notified are to be requested to furnish within 60 days any additional information that the Commission should have prior to final consideration of Rescission for the portion of State Route 54 Freeway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the existing location of State Highway Route 54 between I-5 to SR-125 (Segments 1 and 2) and a separate alignment from SR-94 to the southern city limits of El Cajon (Segment 3SA) shall be retained and unaffected by this action.

SR-54 Rescission Map - 11-SD-54

