



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
CALIFORNIA DIVISION  
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100  
Sacramento, CA. 95814  
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IN REPLY REFER TO  
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Nova Blazej, Federal Activities Office (CMD-2)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Attention: Ms. Nancy Levin



Dear Ms. Blazej:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Placer County Transportation Agency (PCTPA) are requesting your concurrence on the range of alternatives for the Placer Parkway in Placer County, as part of the NEPA/Section 404 Memorandum of Understanding with the FHWA, Caltrans, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The range of alternatives is intended to be included in the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for circulation to the public.

These discussions were initiated at the June 28, 2005 meeting, after concurrence was reached on (1) Purpose and Need and (2) Criteria to be Used for Selecting the Range of Alternatives.

The range of alternatives to be studied in the Draft EIS/EIR includes the five build alternatives approved by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA) Board plus the No Build Alternative. The build alternatives are shown on the attached Figure, entitled Five Recommended Corridor Alignment Alternatives, dated October 24, 2005.

- (a) Alternative 1 – the “Red Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 approximately 1/2 mile north of Riego Road, east approximately one mile north of Baseline Road to approximately Watt Avenue, proceeding north and transitioning in an easterly direction at the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, then in an easterly direction connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
- (b) Alternative 2 – the “Orange Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 approximately 1/2 mile north of Riego Road to an area between Pleasant Grove Road and Locust Road, where it would proceed northeast to the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, then in an easterly direction connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.



- (c) Alternative 3 – the “Blue Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 approximately 1/2 mile north of Riego Road to an area between Pleasant Grove Road and Locust Road, where it would proceed north along the Sutter/Placer County Line, transitioning to an easterly direction approximately one-half mile south of the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, north past the basin and then east, connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
- (d) Alternative 4 – the “Yellow Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 at the current Sankey Road/SR 70/99 intersection, proceeding east and northeast, transitioning to an easterly direction approximately one-half mile south of the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, north past the basin and then east, connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
- (e) Alternative 5 – the “Green Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 at the current Sankey Road/SR 70/99 intersection, proceeding east and northeast, transitioning to an easterly direction just south of the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, north past the basin and then east, connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.

In addition, all build alternatives will include the following concepts to avoid and minimize direct and indirect impacts to aquatic resources and other natural resources:

1. Implement the following goals and policies identified for the project:
  - Do not allow access in areas currently designated for agricultural uses;
  - Restrict access in the seven-mile segment between Fiddymont Road and Pleasant Grove Road to one potential connection to a future extension of Watt Avenue or another nearby roadway extension;
  - Create a no-development buffer zone along the Parkway, ranging from 500 feet in the western and eastern segment to 1000 feet in the central segment; and,
  - Buy agricultural/conservation easements in areas along the Parkway to prevent development within the buffer zone.
2. Project proponents will be working toward implementing the buffer policy, including such potential concepts as land use controls, land leases, general plans, zoning/overlay zoning, covenants/deed restrictions, conservation easements, urban growth boundaries.
3. Span Pleasant Grove Creek.
4. Use Best Management Policies (BMP) to avoid and minimize environmental impacts.

Finally, the Draft EIS/EIR will include a “Land Use and Policy Scenario” that analyzes how the future transportation demand could be met without building a new freeway, but rather by changing land use and policy assumptions. The goal of the evaluation is to disclose to decision makers and the public how land use, policy, and “smart-growth” tools could be used, in

combination with increased transit and transportation system management tools, to lower VMT enough so that a new freeway would not be necessary. This analysis will not be an alternative for purposes of NEPA and CEQA analysis.

The analysis will describe and incorporate all feasible tools to meet anticipated demand without a new freeway, even those that are outside the authority of the project sponsors or would require actions by municipalities or decision makers outside the Placer Parkway study area. Some of these tools are used in the Sacramento Region Blueprint Transportation and Land Use Study (2005), and the "Modeling Long-Range Transportation and Land Use Scenarios for the Sacramento Region, Using Citizen Generate Policies" Report to the Mineta Foundation (Johnston, Gao, and Clay 2004). They include pricing mechanisms such as parking fees and congestion pricing; mode shifts from auto to transit/biking/walking, establishing strong urban growth boundaries, and increasing land use densities.

The FHWA, Caltrans, and PCTPA greatly appreciate your ongoing involvement in the Placer Parkway Corridor project. Following your formal agreement on the range of alternatives for this project, we will prepare the Draft EIS/EIR for circulation and public review.

Sincerely,



For  
Gene K. Fong  
Division Administrator

Enclosure

cc: (E-mail) (w/Enclosure)  
Jay Norvell, Caltrans  
Terry Abbott, Caltrans  
Germaine Belanger, Caltrans  
Katrina Pierce, Caltrans  
John Webb, Caltrans  
Japtej Gill, Caltrans  
Steve Propst, Caltrans  
Pat McAchren, Caltrans  
Celia McAdam, PCTPA  
Stan Tidman, PCTPA  
Leland Dong, FHWA  
Gary Sweeten, FHWA  
Maiser Khaled, FHWA

**DRAFT CONCURRENCE POINTS FOR RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES  
PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR PRESERVATION TIER 1 EIS/EIR**

**Dated December 15, 2005**

An interagency working group has been meeting to develop concurrence regarding the range of alternatives to be studied in the Tier 1 Draft EIS/EIR for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project. These discussions were initiated at the June 28, 2005 meeting, after concurrence was reached on (1) Purpose and Need and (2) Criteria to be Used for Selecting the Range of Alternatives.

Evaluation of a wide range of alternatives was a key component of the group's discussion's, because the Placer Parkway Tier 1 EIS/EIR is intended to identify a corridor where a Placer Parkway will be constructed. Prior to construction, future project-specific NEPA approval and a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit will be required. Because a Section 404 permit can only be granted for the LEDPA, the working group considered a wide range of potential alternatives to ensure that any likely LEDPAs were not eliminated at this stage. This work was undertaken to streamline the environmental review process when a Section 404 permit application is filed in the future.

The group looked at a wide range of alternatives to meet the project need, and arrived at this range of alternatives in several ways. This range included: 1) PCTPA build alternatives, 2) TSM Alternative; 3) Shorter Parkway Alternative; 4) Combined TSM/Shorter Parkway Alternative.

The PCTPA build alternatives were developed based on avoidance principles and were designed to avoid or minimize impacts to aquatic resources, consistent with the Purpose and Need and engineering constraints. For instance, potential interchanges with State Highways are dictated in part by existing interchanges and distance requirements for safety.

The group also identified potential alternatives that did not require building a new roadway, or that would reduce the length of a new roadway. These concepts included a TSM Alternative that went beyond traditional TSM measures to include widening of existing roadways, additional and more robust transit routes, and other measures that would improve traffic flow. Another concept considered was to construct a new roadway in the eastern portion of the study area that would connect to Baseline Road one-half to one mile west of Watt Avenue, and continue west as Baseline Road without the need for a new roadway from Watt Avenue to State Route 70/99. In this scenario, Baseline Road would be upgraded to a 6-lane expressway, with no driveway access and some grade-separated interchanges. Neither of these concepts met the project's Purpose and Need, resulting in LOS F levels of congestion for up to 3 hours per day. These two concepts were then combined, with robust additional transit added to the original TSM concept, combined with the shorter Parkway terminating at a Baseline Road west of Watt Avenue. This concept also resulted in LOS F levels of congestion for up to 3 hours per day.

An additional concept was then identified. The team considered what would be required to satisfy the transportation need in this corridor. In this concept, Baseline Road would be a six- to eight-lane full freeway, with two- to four-lane parallel frontage roads on both sides of the freeway to provide local access currently being provided by Baseline Road. It would include additional interchanges and additional lanes on the Riego/SR 70/99 freeway interchange ramps. It would effectively result in a new facility, since an expanded roadway and frontage roads would be required. This concept would produce

somewhat better results, but still would result in LOS F conditions along portions of Baseline/Riego Road. It would not meet the project's Purpose and Need.

To be sure the group didn't leave anything out, it looked at other ways of meeting the project need, such as changes in land use policies, densities, etc. Recognizing that this group doesn't have land use control, it was determined that such an evaluation would not result in a feasible alternative. However, the evaluation will be conducted and included in the Draft EIS/EIR to provide valuable information to policy makers regarding future land use decisions that may be made. The group was not able to identify feasible alternatives that did not involve a new roadway.

The group agreed to include the five build alternatives identified by PCTPA plus the No Build Alternative, with a commitment to construction options and resource protection as a way to meet avoidance obligations. The concurrence points are summarized below:

- 2) The range of alternatives to be studied in the Draft EIS/EIR includes the five build alternatives approved by the SPRTA Board plus the No Build Alternative. The build alternatives are shown on the attached Figure, entitled Five Recommended Corridor Alignment Alternatives, dated October 24, 2005.
  - (a) Alternative 1 – the “Red Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 approximately 1/2 mile north of Riego Road, east approximately one mile north of Baseline Road to approximately Watt Avenue, proceeding north and transitioning in an easterly direction at the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, then in an easterly direction connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
  - (b) Alternative 2 – the “Orange Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 approximately 1/2 mile north of Riego Road to an area between Pleasant Grove Road and Locust Road, where it would proceed northeast to the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, then in an easterly direction connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
  - (c) Alternative 3 – the “Blue Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 approximately 1/2 mile north of Riego Road to an area between Pleasant Grove Road and Locust Road, where it would proceed north along the Sutter/Placer County Line, transitioning to an easterly direction approximately one-half mile south of the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, north past the basin and then east, connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
  - (d) Alternative 4 – the “Yellow Alternative”: Extending from SR 70/99 at the current Sankey Road/SR 70/99 intersection, proceeding east and northeast, transitioning to an easterly direction approximately one-half mile south of the future City of Roseville Retention Basin, north past the basin and then east, connecting to SR 65 at Whitney Boulevard.
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Addresses to send to:

1) Nova Blazej, Federal Activities Office (CMD-2)  
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Attention: Ms. Nancy Levin

2)  
Mr. Wayne White, Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605  
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

Attention: Mr. Kenneth Sanchez

3)

Ms. Jody Jones, District Director  
California Department of Transportation  
District 3  
P.O. Box 911  
Marysville, CA 95901

Attention: Ms. Katrina Pierce

4)

Mr. Mike Jewell, Chief  
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
Sacramento District Regulatory Section  
1325 J. Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Mr. Tom Cavanaugh

5)

Ms. Celia McAdam, Executive Director  
Placer County Transportation Planning Committee  
249 Nevada Street  
Auburn, CA 95603

3) All build alternatives will include the following concepts to avoid and minimize direct and indirect impacts to aquatic resources and other natural resources:

(a) Implement the following goals and policies identified for the project:

- Do not allow access in areas currently designated for agricultural uses;
- Restrict access in the seven-mile segment between Fiddymont Road and Pleasant Grove Road to one potential connection to a future extension of Watt Avenue or another nearby roadway extension;
- Create a no-development buffer zone along the Parkway, ranging from 500 feet in the western and eastern segment to 1000 feet in the central segment; and,
- Buy agricultural/conservation easements in areas along the Parkway to prevent development within the buffer zone.

(b) Project proponents will be working toward implementing the buffer policy, including such potential concepts as land use controls, land leases, general plans, zoning/overlay zoning, covenants/deed restrictions, conservation easements, urban growth boundaries.

(c) Span Pleasant Grove Creek.

(d) BMPs

3) Land-use and Policy Transportation Solution: The Draft EIS/EIS will include an analysis of how the future transportation demand could be met without building a new freeway, but rather by changing land use and policy assumptions. The goal of the evaluation is to disclose to decision makers and the public how land use, policy, and “smart-growth” tools could be used, in combination with increased transit and transportation system management tools, to lower VMT enough so that a new freeway would not be necessary. This analysis will not be an alternative for purposes of NEPA and CEQA analysis.

The analysis will describe and incorporate all feasible tools to meet anticipated demand without a new freeway, even those that are outside the authority of the project sponsors or would require actions by municipalities or decision makers outside the Placer Parkway study area. Some of these tools are used in the Sacramento Region Blueprint Transportation and Land Use Study (2005), and the “Modeling Long-Range Transportation and Land Use Scenarios for the Sacramento Region, Using Citizen Generate Policies” Report to the Mineta Foundation (Johnston, Gao, and Clay 2004). They include pricing mechanisms such as parking fees and congestion pricing; mode shifts from auto to transit/biking/walking, establishing strong urban growth boundaries, and increasing land use densities.