



Information Sheet
Route 180 Westside Expressway Route Adoption Study
Fresno County, California
March 30, 2011

Introduction

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is proposing that the California Transportation Commission adopt a new segment of State Route 180, from Interstate 5 to the end of the freeway portion of State Route 180, near Valentine in the city of Fresno. Caltrans would recommend the alternative determined to offer the most appropriate location for an ultimate four-lane expressway for State Route 180 to the commission following public and resource agency review of the route adoption study. The formal approval of the extension of State Route 180 would enable Caltrans, in cooperation with local governments, to plan for future transportation projects needed within the corridor.

Purpose of the Route Adoption Study

The purpose of the route adoption study is to provide alternative routes for future transportation projects that will improve mobility east and west through the center of Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley, connecting the cities of Fresno, Kerman, Mendota, and Firebaugh and the unincorporated community of Rolinda. Future facility improvements would provide:

- Adequate capacity for the regional movement of people and goods.
- Continuity for east-west regional travel.
- Improved accessibility and shorter travel times between Westside communities.
- Improved safety.

Project Description

Caltrans has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Report/Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/Tier I EIS) to examine the effects future projects associated with the proposed corridor alternatives may have on the environment. Three proposed route adoption alternatives – Alternative 1 (Extend and Improve Existing Route 180), Alternative 2 (Southern Route), and Alternative 3 (Northern Route) – together with additional route variations and the No-Action/No-Project Alternative, are under consideration. See attached map for details. For purposes of a route adoption, each build alternative is 1,000 feet wide and is briefly described below:

Alternative 1 extends approximately 48 miles across the valley. This alternative begins at a point where a direct westerly extension of Belmont Avenue would intersect Interstate 5. The alignment proceeds east crossing the California Aqueduct and across farmland and turns southeast between San Diego Avenue and Ohio Avenue, passing south of the city of Mendota. This alternative generally follows existing SR 180 until it reaches a connection with the existing SR 180 freeway terminus at Brawley Avenue. This alternative contains the following three variations:

- Variation 1A (Shields Avenue/West Mendota Bypass) was developed to provide additional opportunities for access for the city of Firebaugh.
- Variation 1B (Kerman Bypass) was developed to bypass the city of Kerman and avoid impacts to existing and proposed development within the city's sphere of influence.
- Variation 1C (Rolinda and Kerman Bypass) was developed to bypass both the city of Kerman and the community of Rolinda to avoid impacts to existing and proposed development within the city of Kerman's sphere of influence and to existing development at the community of Rolinda.

Alternative 2 extends approximately 49 miles across the valley. This route begins at a point where Belmont Avenue would intersect Interstate 5, following the same alignment as Alternative 1 until just east of SR 33. It then travels northeasterly to generally follow the McKinley Avenue, Belmont Avenue, and Nielsen Avenue alignments as it travels east to join the existing SR 180 freeway.

Alternative 3 extends approximately 50 miles across the valley. This route begins at an existing interchange on Interstate 5 at Shields Avenue and runs eastward 18 miles to SR 33, north of Mendota. From SR 33, the route continues eastward across agricultural land, the Mendota Pool Park, and the Fresno Slough, and generally parallels to the south of the San Joaquin River/Madera County line. The route veers southeasterly to coincide with Alternative 2 for the remainder of the alignment.

Study Schedule

Scoping Meeting: June 11, 2008

Draft Environmental Document Circulation: March 14–April 28, 2011

Public Hearing: March 30, 2011

Preferred Alternative to be selected: June 15, 2011

Final Environmental Document: February 1, 2012

Public Comments

Comments on the draft EIR/Tier I EIS during the public comment review period must be submitted by April 28, 2011. Comments should be submitted in writing to: Trais Norris; Senior Environmental Planner, Caltrans District 6, 2015 E. Shields Avenue, Fresno, CA 93726, or via email, trais_norris@dot.ca.gov.

