

**CITY OF DIXON
PARKWAY BOULEVARD RAILROAD
GRADE SEPARATION PROJECT**

Draft Environmental Impact Report

February 2008

Prepared for:
City of Dixon

Prepared by:
TY Lin International

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
1.1 Scope of the EIR	1-1
1.2 Environmental Process.....	1-1
1.3 Format of the Document	1-3
1.4 Terminology Used in the EIR	1-4
1.5 Mitigation Measures.....	1-4
1.6 Type of EIR.....	1-5
2.0 SUMMARY	2-1
2.1 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT	2-1
2.1.1 Project Location	2-1
2.1.2 General Description of the Project.....	2-1
2.1.3 Regulatory Requirements.....	2-2
2.2 GROWTH INDUCING AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	2-2
2.3 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS.....	2-2
2.4 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	2-3
3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	3-1
3.1 Proposed Project	3-1
3.2 Project Background and Purpose	3-4
3.3 Proposed Facilities	3-7
3.4 Construction of the Proposed Project.....	3-16
3.5 Project Alternatives.....	3-18
3.6 Regulatory Requirements.....	3-19
4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS	4.1-1
4.1 Introduction to the Environmental Analysis	4.1-1
4.2 Geology, Soils, and Seismicity	4.2-1
4.2.1 Environmental Setting.....	4.2-1
4.2.2 Regulatory Framework	4.2-2
4.2.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.2-2
4.3 Hydrology, Water Quality, and Stormwater Runoff.....	4.3-1
4.3.1 Environmental Setting.....	4.3-1
4.3.2 Regulatory Framework	4.3-2
4.3.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.3-8
4.4 Hazardous Waste and Materials.....	4.4-1
4.4.1 Environmental Setting.....	4.4-1
4.4.2 Regulatory Framework	4.4-2
4.4.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.4-4

4.5	Air Quality	4.5-1
4.5.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.5-1
4.5.2	Regulatory Framework	4.5-4
4.5.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.5-6
4.6	Noise	4.6-1
4.6.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.6-1
4.6.2	Regulatory Framework	4.6-6
4.6.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.6-7
4.7	Biological Resources.....	4.7-1
4.7.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.7-1
4.7.2	Regulatory Framework	4.7-6
4.7.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.7-11
4.8	Historical and Archaeological Resources	4.8-1
4.8.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.8-1
4.8.2	Regulatory Framework	4.8-2
4.8.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.8-5
4.9	Land Use, Agriculture, and Recreation.....	4.9-1
4.9.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.9-1
4.9.2	Regulatory Framework	4.9-3
4.9.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.9-6
4.10	Public Services and Utilities	4.10-1
4.10.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.10-1
4.10.2	Regulatory Framework	4.10-4
4.10.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.10-6
4.11	Transportation and Circulation	4.11-1
4.11.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.11-1
4.11.2	Regulatory Framework	4.11-5
4.11.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.11-7
4.12	Visual Resources.....	4.12-1
4.12.1	Environmental Setting.....	4.12-1
4.12.2	Regulatory Framework	4.12-5
4.12.3	Impacts and Mitigation Measures	4.12-7
5.0	ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES	5-1
5.1	The Orange Alignment Alternative.....	5-6
5.2	No Project Alternative.....	5-8
5.3	Alternative Considered but Eliminated from Further Consideration	5-11
6.0	CEQA-REQUIRED CONSIDERATIONS	6-1
6.1	Growth Inducing Impacts.....	6-1
6.1.1	Legal Considerations.....	6-1
6.1.2	Growth Effects on Proposed Projects	6-2
6.2	Cumulative Impacts	6-3
6.3	Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts.....	6-10
6.4	Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes	6-10
6.5	Effects Found Not to be Significant.....	6-11
7.0	REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	7-1
8.0	DOCUMENT PREPARERS.....	8-1

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1 Potentially Required Permits and Approvals..... 2-2
 Table 2-2 Summary of Significant Impacts and Mitigation Measures 2-4
 Table 3-1 Potentially Required Permits and Approvals..... 3-15
 Table 4.5-1 Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards 4.5-2
 Table 4.6-1 Summary of Short Term Noise Measurements, August 31, 2005 4.6-3
 Table 4.6-2 Existing Traffic Noise Levels At Noise Sensitive Land Uses 4.6-5
 Table 4.6-3 Predicted Future (Year 2025) No Project Traffic Noise Levels 4.6-5
 Table 4.6-4 City of Dixon Zoning Ordinance Noise Performance Standards 4.6-6
 Table 4.6-5 Construction Equipment Noise..... 4.6-8
 Table 4.6-6 Predicted Future (Year 2025) Plus Project Traffic Noise Levels 4.6-10
 Table 4.10-1 Existing Utilities Within the Project Area 4.10-1
 Table 4.11-1 Peak Hour Intersection Operations-Existing Conditions 4.11-4
 Table 4.11-2 Peak Hour Intersection Operations-2025 Predictions 4.11-5
 Table 4.11-3 Peak Hour Intersection Operations-2025 Predictions with Project 4.11-9
 Table 5-1 Alternatives Evaluation Table 5-5

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1 Vicinity Map 3-2
 Figure 3-2 Proposed Project..... 3-3
 Figure 3-3 Overcrossing Structure General Plan 3-8
 Figure 4-1 Noise Sensitive Receptor Locations..... 4.6-4
 Figure 4-2 Habitats within the Project Area 4.7-3
 Figure 4-3 Distances from Nearby Properties to Project Features..... 4.12-3
 Figure 5-1 Project Alignment Alternatives..... 5-3
 Figure 5-2 Close-Up of Project Alignment Alternatives 5-4

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A - NOP and NOP Comments
- Appendix B - Wetland Verification Letter
- Appendix C – Horse Respiratory Impact Report

CHAPTER 1.0

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE OF THE EIR

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City of Dixon (City) in order to assess potential impacts associated with the proposed Parkway Boulevard Railroad Grade Separation Project.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15121, the purpose of this document is to provide information to City officials, resource agency personnel, and the general public regarding the potentially significant environmental effects of the project, to identify possible means to minimize those effects, and to describe reasonable alternatives to the project. In addition, this document discloses growth-inducing impacts, significant cumulative impacts, and significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided.

It is not the purpose of the EIR to recommend approval or denial of the project. However, the City must respond to each significant effect identified in the EIR and is required (under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15090) to certify that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to action on the project.

CEQA requires that a lead agency neither approve nor carry out a project unless the significant environmental effects have been reduced to an acceptable level, if possible. However, CEQA also requires that decision-makers balance the benefits of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks. If environmental impacts are identified as significant and unavoidable, the City may still approve the project if it believes that social, economic, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable impacts. The City would then be required to state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project based on information in the EIR and other information in the public record as a “statement of overriding considerations” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093).

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

The City of Dixon, as the CEQA lead agency, initiated the environmental review process for this EIR with the circulation of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) dated February 15, 2005. The NOP included a brief description of the proposed project and its objectives, in addition to a list of expected environmental effects. The NOP was available for public and agency review and comment for a 30-day period, which ended March 18, 2005. A scoping meeting to discuss the NOP was held by the City on March 2, 2005. The NOP, comments received, and responses to the comments are included in Appendix A.

This Draft EIR will be circulated for a 45-day public and agency review period. Copies of the document have been made available to local and state agencies, interested organizations and individuals, and a copy is available at the Dixon public library. The publication of this EIR marks the beginning of the 45-day comment period, during which written comments will be received by the City of Dixon at the following address:

Jason Riley, Associate Engineer
City of Dixon Engineering Department
600 East A Street, Dixon, CA 95620
Fax: (707) 678-7039
jriley@ci.dixon.ca.us

Submit comments by the deadline of: April 18, 2008. We welcome your comments. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the proposed project, please attend a public information meeting currently scheduled for mid-March, 2008. The date, time, and location of this meeting will be advertised in the Dixon Tribune, Independent Voice, as well as on the project and City web sites.

Technical reports supporting this EIR are available for public review at the City of Dixon Engineering Department, during normal business hours, at the address noted above. The technical reports include:

Environmental Vision, 2007. Visual Resources Technical Study, Parkway Boulevard Grade Separation Project. Berkeley, CA.

Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc. 2006. Traffic Operations Report for Parkway Boulevard Grade Separation Project. Sacramento, CA.

GEOCON Consultants, Inc., 2007. Limited Site Investigation Report, Parkway Boulevard Grade Separation Project. Livermore, CA

Gershwin, L. J. 2008. Horse Respiratory Impact Report. School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, CA.

J. C. Brennan & Associates, 2007. FHWA/Caltrans Protocol Technical (Noise) Analysis, Parkway Boulevard Grade Separation Project. Sacramento, CA.

Parikh Consultants, Inc., 2006. Proposed Parkway Blvd. Grade Separation Project, Phase 1 ISA, Dixon, Solano County, CA. Milpitas, CA

Pacific Municipal Consultants, 2007. Revised Draft Natural Environmental Study (NES), Discussions of Biological Investigations and Wetland Studies. Rancho Cordova, CA.

Pacific Municipal Consultants, 2007. Cultural Resources Study: Archaeological Survey Report, Historic Architecture Study Report, and Historic Property Survey Report (ASR/HASR/HPSR). Rancho Cordova, CA.

Comments will be addressed in Responses to Comments in the Final EIR, which, together with the Draft EIR (including corrected pages) and the Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP), will constitute the EIR for the proposed project. In a public hearing, the City Council will review the project, the EIR, and public testimony and will decide whether to certify the EIR and approve or deny the project.

1.3 FORMAT OF THE DOCUMENT

This Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1.0, Introduction. This chapter describes the purpose and organization of the EIR and the EIR preparation, review, and certification process.

Chapter 2.0, Summary. This chapter presents a summary of the project description, key environmental issues, and significant environmental impacts that are expected to result from project construction and implementation. This chapter also presents a summary of mitigation measures proposed to reduce or eliminate expected impacts.

Chapter 3.0, Project Description. This chapter describes the proposed project location and existing facilities, the components of the proposed project, proposed project objectives, and construction activities.

Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis. This chapter includes discussions of environmental issue areas for which impacts are expected to result from the proposed project. For each of these environmental issue areas, a description of the environmental setting, a discussion of expected impacts resulting from the proposed project, and proposed mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate expected impacts are presented.

Chapter 5.0, Analysis of Alternatives. This chapter presents a description of project alternatives and their expected impacts.

Chapter 6.0, CEQA-Required Considerations. This chapter discusses growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project, cumulative impacts of the project and other projects within the vicinity, and significant unavoidable impacts resulting from the proposed project.

Chapter 7.0, References and Bibliography. This chapter provides a list of references contacted and materials consulted during the preparation of the EIR.

Chapter 8.0, Document Preparers. This chapter presents a list of EIR authors.

Appendices. Appendix A consists of the NOP, Responses to Comments on the NOP (Appendix A), Appendix B is the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Verification Letter, and Appendix C is the Horse Respiratory Impact Report.

1.4 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE EIR

This EIR uses the following terminology to describe the environmental effects of the proposed project:

- **Significance Criteria:** A set of standards used by the lead agency to determine at what level or threshold an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this document include those discussed in the CEQA Guidelines: factual or scientific information; regulatory standards of local, state, and federal agencies; and goals, objectives, and policies identified in the City of Dixon and Solano County General Plans.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** An impact that would cause no substantial change in the environment, requiring no mitigation.
- **Potentially Significant Impact:** An impact that could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Mitigation measures are identified to reduce or eliminate these impacts to the environment.
- **Significant Unavoidable Impact:** A potentially significant impact that cannot be avoided or mitigated.

1.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

The CEQA Guidelines, Section 15370, define mitigation as an action that would accomplish one or more of the following:

- Avoids an impact altogether by not implementing a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimizes an impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action.
- Rectifies an impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- Reduces or eliminates an impact over time through the use of preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the project.
- Compensates for an impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to “adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program for the changes to the project which it has adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.” A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) would be prepared for the proposed project. This program would be organized in a tabular format and would include the required mitigation measures identified in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis. Parties responsible for implementing and monitoring the implementation of each of the mitigation measures will be identified in the MMRP.

1.6 TYPE OF EIR

The CEQA *Guidelines* identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR is prepared as a Project EIR pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21156. A Project EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific project (CEQA *Guidelines* Section 15161). This type of EIR focuses primarily on the changes in the environment that would occur as a result of project implementation and examines all phases of a particular project (i.e., planning, construction, and operation). Ultimately, the EIR is used by the Lead Agency as a tool in evaluating a proposed project's environmental impacts and can be further used to modify, approve, or deny approval of a proposed project based on the analysis provided in the EIR.

CHAPTER 2.0

SUMMARY

