

PM Conformity Hot Spot Analysis – Project Summary for Interagency Consultation

RTIP ID# <i>(required)</i> RIV170901				
TCWG Consideration Date March 25, 2025				
<p>Project Description <i>(clearly describe project)</i> The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is proposing to construct new lanes along Interstate 15 (I-15) between Post Mile (PM) 21.2 and PM 38.1 in Riverside County, California. The primary component of the I-15 Express Lanes Project Southern Extension Project (Project) would be the addition of two tolled express lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions within the median of I-15 from State Route 74 (SR-74) (Central Avenue) (PM 22.3) in the City of Lake Elsinore, through the unincorporated Riverside County community of Temescal Valley, to El Cerrito Road (PM 38.1) in the City of Corona, for a distance of approximately 15.8 miles. The proposed Project would also add a southbound auxiliary lane between both the Main Street (PM 21.2) Off-Ramp and SR-74 (Central Avenue) On-Ramp (approximately 0.75 mile), and the SR-74 (Central Avenue) Off-Ramp and Nichols Road On-Ramp (PM 23.9) (approximately one mile). Along with the lane additions, which would extend from PM 21.2 to 38.1, the proposed Project would include widening of up to 15 bridges; potential construction of noise barriers, retaining walls, and drainage systems; and implementation of electronic toll collection equipment and signs. In addition, due to the southbound express lanes access between the Cajalco Road and Weirick Road interchanges, the southbound I-15 Weirick Road Off-Ramp would be configured as a dual lane exit. Associated improvements for the toll lanes, including advance signage and transition striping, would extend approximately two miles from each end of the express lane limits to PM 20.3 in the south and PM 40.1 in the north. The proposed lane additions and supporting infrastructure are expected to be constructed primarily within the existing state right of way. Figure 1 shows the project vicinity and Figure 2 shows the project location.</p>				
<p>Type of Project <i>(use Table 1 on instruction sheet)</i> Change to existing state highway</p>				
County Riverside	<p>Narrative Location/Route & Postmiles I-15 (PM 20.3 to 40.1) Caltrans Projects – EA# 08-0J0820</p>			
Lead Agency: RCTC				
Contact Person Jeff Dietzler	Phone# 951-787-4019	Fax#	Email jdietzler@rctc.org	
<p>Hot Spot Pollutant of Concern <i>(check one or both)</i> PM_{2.5} X PM₁₀ X</p>				
Federal Action for which Project-Level PM Conformity is Needed <i>(check appropriate box)</i>				
Categorical Exclusion (NEPA)	X EA or Draft EIS	FONSI or Final EIS	PS&E or Construction	Other

Scheduled Date of Federal Action: 10/2025				
NEPA Assignment – Project Type <i>(check appropriate box)</i>				
Exempt	Section 326 – Categorical Exemption		X	Section 327 – Non- Categorical Exemption
Current Programming Dates <i>(as appropriate)</i>				
	PE/Environmental	ENG	ROW	CON
Start	5/2019	6/2025	10/2025	6/2027
End	10/2025	6/2027	6/2027	12/2030
Project Purpose and Need (Summary): <i>(attach additional sheets as necessary)</i>				
Purpose				
The purpose of the proposed Project is to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and manage traffic operations, throughput, and travel times along the corridor • Expand travel mode choice along the corridor • Provide an option for travel time reliability • Provide a cost-effective mobility solution • Expand and maintain compatibility with the express lane network in the region 				
Need				
Existing traffic volumes often exceed current highway capacity along several segments of I-15 between SR-74 (Central Avenue) and El Cerrito Road. Due to forecasted population growth and the continued development to support the projected growth in the region, the I-15 corridor is expected to continue to experience increased congestion and longer commute times that are projected to negatively affect traffic operations along the freeway mainline.				
Surrounding Land Use/Traffic Generators <i>(especially effect on diesel traffic)</i>				
The land uses located along the Project corridor include residences, commercial developments, industrial uses, and open space. The majority of the sensitive receptors within or adjacent to the Project area are residential, park, church, and school uses.				
Opening Year: Build and No Build LOS, AADT, % and # Trucks, Truck AADT of Proposed Facility I-15				
2030 No Build: ADT= 251,500, Truck ADT= 24,020 (9.6%), Level of Service (LOS) F				
2030 Build: ADT= 258,200, Truck ADT= 24,020 (9.3%), LOS F				
RTP Horizon Year / Design Year: Build and No Build LOS, AADT, % and # Trucks, Truck AADT of Proposed Facility I-15				
2050 No Build: ADT= 314,500, Truck ADT= 30,520 (9.7%), LOS F				
2050 Build: ADT= 348,200, Truck ADT= 30,520 (8.8%), LOS F				

<p>Opening Year: If facility is an interchange(s) or intersection(s), Build and No Build cross-street AADT, % and # trucks, truck AADT N/A</p>
<p>RTP Horizon Year / Design Year: If facility is an interchange (s) or intersection(s), Build and No Build cross-street AADT, % and # trucks, truck AADT N/A</p>
<p>Describe potential traffic redistribution effects of congestion relief (<i>impact on other facilities</i>) See attached analysis.</p>
<p>Comments/Explanation/Details (<i>attach additional sheets as necessary</i>) See attached analysis.</p>

PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀ Hot-Spot Analysis

The proposed Project is within a nonattainment area for federal standards for particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}) and within an attainment/maintenance area for the federal standards for particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀). Therefore, per 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 93, hot-spot analyses are required for conformity purposes. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency does not require hot-spot analyses—qualitative or quantitative—for projects that are not listed in Section 93.123(b)(1) as an air quality concern.

According to 40 CFR Part 93.123(b)(1), the following are Projects of Air Quality Concern (POAQC):

- i. New highway projects that have a significant number of diesel vehicles, and expanded highway projects that have a significant increase in the number of diesel vehicles;
- ii. Projects affecting intersections that are at Level-of-Service D, E, or F with a significant number of diesel vehicles, or those that will change to Level-of-Service D, E, or F because of increased traffic volumes from a significant number of diesel vehicles related to the project;
- iii. New bus and rail terminals and transfer points that have a significant number of diesel vehicles congregating at a single location;
- iv. Expanded bus and rail terminals and transfer points that significantly increase the number of diesel vehicles congregating at a single location; and
- v. Projects in or affecting locations, areas, or categories of sites which are identified in the PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} applicable implementation plan or implementation plan submission, as appropriate, as sites of violation or possible violation.

The Project does not qualify as a POAQC because of the following reasons:

- i) The build alternative proposed as part of the Project would expand I-15 through the addition of express lanes and auxiliary lanes. Tables 1 and 2 list the average daily traffic (ADT) and truck ADT volumes along the highway segments within the Project area for the opening year (2030) and horizon year (2050) conditions, respectively. These tables also compare the ADT and Truck ADT volumes associated with the build alternative to the No-Build conditions. As shown in

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Tables 1 and 2, the Project would increase the total ADT by up to 17,900 in 2030 and by up to 66,600 in 2050. However, as the new lanes cannot accommodate heavy duty vehicles, it is not anticipated that the extension of the existing express lanes in the median of I-15 would result in a significant increase of truck trips. Therefore, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, the expanded highway would not significantly increase in the number of diesel vehicles.

- ii) As discussed above, the proposed Project would not significantly increase the number of diesel vehicles operating within the Project study area. In addition, the mainline project will not affect local street intersections. Therefore, the proposed Project would not affect intersections that are at LOS D, E, or F with a significant number of diesel vehicles.
- iii) The proposed build alternative does not include the construction of a new bus or rail terminal.
- iv) The proposed build alternative does not expand an existing bus or rail terminal.
- v) The proposed build alternative is not in or affecting locations, areas, or categories of sites that are identified in the PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ applicable implementation plan or implementation plan submission, as appropriate, as sites of violation or possible violation.

Therefore, the proposed Project meets the Clean Air Act requirements and 40 CFR 93.116 without any explicit hot-spot analysis and would not create a new, or worsen an existing, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ violation.

Table 1. 2030 Traffic Volumes

I-15 Freeway Segment	No-Build			Build			Project Increase		
	ADT	Truck ADT	Truck %	ADT	Truck ADT	Truck %	ADT	Truck ADT	% Increase in Trucks
South of Main Street	173,700	16,230	9.3%	185,200	16,230	8.8%	11,500	0	0%
Main Street to SR-74 (Central Avenue)	166,000	15,440	9.3%	178,900	15,440	8.6%	12,900	0	0%
SR-74 (Central Avenue) to Nichols Road	149,100	13,740	9.2%	163,200	13,740	8.4%	14,100	0	0%
Nichols Road to Lake Street	147,900	13,610	9.2%	161,700	13,610	8.4%	13,800	0	0%
Lake Street to Horsethief Canyon	155,900	14,460	9.3%	170,400	14,460	8.5%	14,500	0	0%
Horsethief Canyon to Indian Truck Trail	155,900	14,460	9.3%	170,400	14,460	8.5%	14,500	0	0%
Indian Truck Trail to Temescal Canyon Road	158,700	14,650	9.2%	174,200	14,650	8.4%	15,500	0	0%
Temescal Canyon Road to Weirick Road	161,000	14,750	9.2%	176,500	14,750	8.4%	15,500	0	0%
Weirick Road to Cajalco Road	185,000	17,190	9.3%	199,500	17,190	8.6%	14,500	0	0%
Cajalco Road to El Cerrito Road	205,000	19,290	9.4%	222,900	19,290	8.7%	17,900	0	0%
El Cerrito Road to Ontario Avenue	214,200	20,340	9.5%	229,400	20,340	8.9%	15,200	0	0%
Ontario Avenue to Magnolia Avenue	230,500	22,000	9.5%	239,700	22,000	9.2%	9,200	0	0%
Magnolia Avenue to SR-91	251,500	24,020	9.6%	258,200	24,020	9.3%	6,700	0	0%

Table 2. 2050 Traffic Volumes

I-15 Freeway Segment	No-Build			Build			Project Increase		
	ADT	Truck ADT	Truck %	ADT	Truck ADT	Truck %	ADT	Truck ADT	% Increase in Trucks
South of Main Street	178,700	17,270	9.7%	225,300	17,270	7.7%	46,600	0	0%
Main Street to SR-74 (Central Avenue)	175,900	16,940	9.6%	227,100	16,940	7.5%	51,200	0	0%
SR-74 (Central Avenue) to Nichols Road	158,400	15,060	9.5%	211,000	15,060	7.1%	52,600	0	0%
Nichols Road to Lake Street	159,000	15,150	9.5%	216,800	15,150	7.0%	57,800	0	0%
Lake Street to Horsethief Canyon	167,700	16,080	9.6%	230,400	16,080	7.0%	62,700	0	0%
Horsethief Canyon to Indian Truck Trail	171,500	16,310	9.5%	231,900	16,310	7.0%	60,400	0	0%
Indian Truck Trail to Temescal Canyon Road	176,600	16,720	9.5%	237,700	16,720	7.0%	61,100	0	0%
Temescal Canyon Road to Weirick Road	180,700	17,090	9.5%	242,800	17,090	7.0%	62,100	0	0%
Weirick Road to Cajalco Road	209,300	20,030	9.6%	275,900	20,030	7.3%	66,600	0	0%
Cajalco Road to El Cerrito Road	264,900	25,540	9.6%	330,700	25,540	7.7%	65,800	0	0%
El Cerrito Road to Ontario Avenue	280,600	27,030	9.6%	334,400	27,030	8.1%	53,800	0	0%
Ontario Avenue to Magnolia Avenue	296,400	28,610	9.7%	338,100	28,610	8.5%	41,700	0	0%
Magnolia Avenue to SR-91	314,500	30,520	9.7%	348,200	30,520	8.8%	33,700	0	0%



Figure 1
Project Vicinity
Interstate 15 Express Lanes Project Southern Extension (I-15 ELPSE)

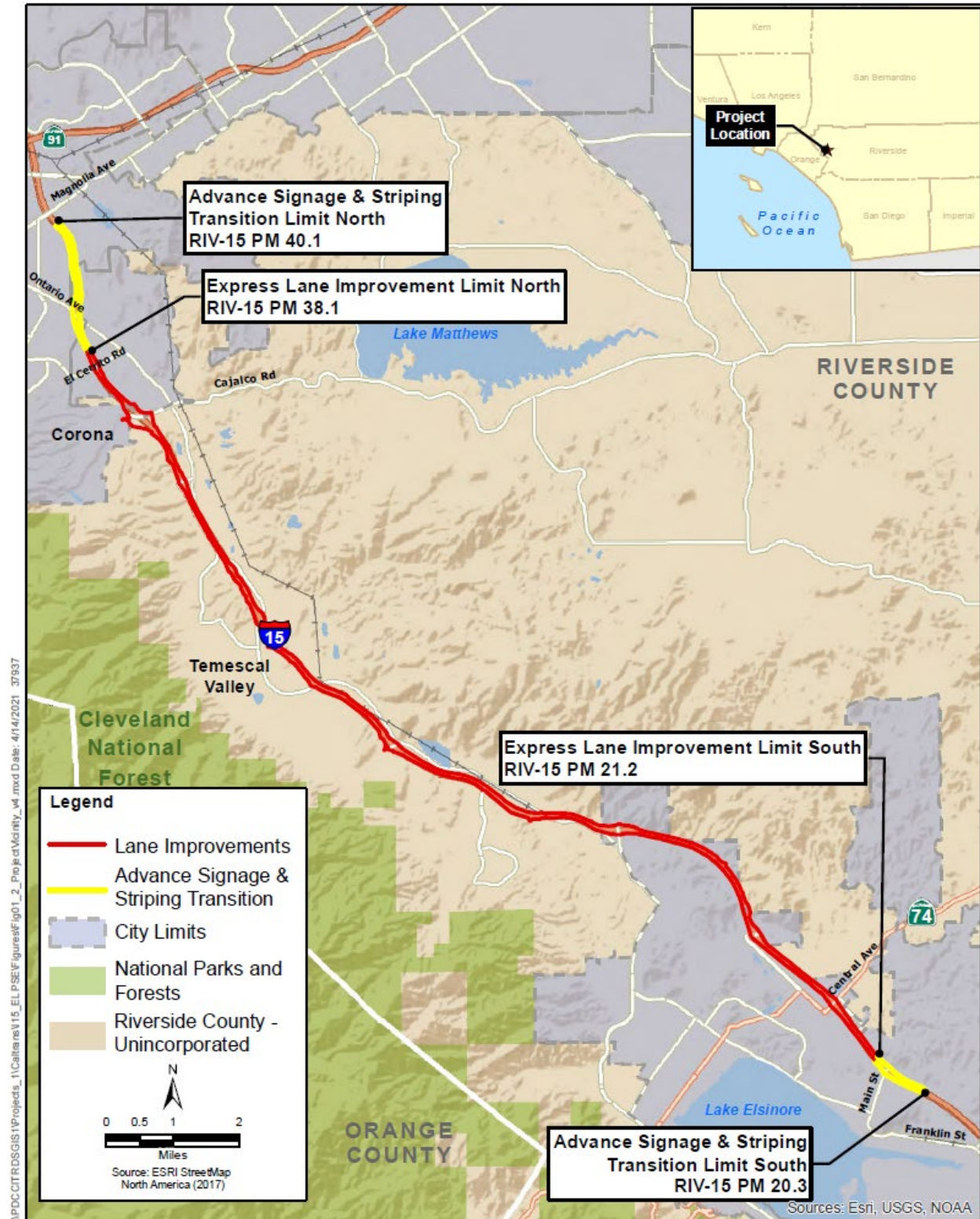


Figure 2
Project Location
Interstate 15 Express Lanes Project Southern Extension (I-15 ELPSE)