# Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the El Dorado to Clinton Rehabilitation Project

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Lead Agency, is preparing an environmental document to address impacts associated with the proposed structural, pavement, and facility improvements on State Route 99 in Fresno, California. The document will be prepared as a joint document pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Caltrans will be preparing an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) for the project, which is known as the El Dorado to Clinton Rehabilitation project. As required by CEQA, Caltrans is distributing this Notice of Preparation and requesting comments from responsible and trustee agencies regarding the significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and reasonable mitigation measures that will be discussed in the EIR/EA. An Initial Study has not been prepared for this project and therefore, not attached to this Notice of Preparation.

**Project Location**
The project sits along State Route (SR) 99 from post miles 21.2 to 24.4 in Fresno County. The project would rehabilitate about 3.2 miles of SR 99 in the City of Fresno from 0.2 mile south of the El Dorado Street overcrossing to the Clinton Avenue overcrossing. See Figure 1 for a Regional Location Map and Figure 2 for a Local Vicinity Map of the project area.

**Project Description**
The project would remove the existing six 12-foot-wide lanes within the project limits on SR 99 and replace them with six 12-foot-wide lanes with continuously reinforced concrete pavement (CRCP). Constructing the new lanes with CRCP would reduce the number of ongoing pavement repairs and maintenance costs within the project limits. The project would also construct a 46-foot-wide paved median and 10-foot-wide outside shoulders.

In addition, the project would construct auxiliary lanes on the northbound and southbound sides of State Route 99 from the State Route 99/ State Route 180 junction to Clinton Avenue. Construction of the auxiliary lanes help with project staging, traffic control, and constructability of the project. During construction, three lanes in each direction on State Route 99 within the project limits would be open at all times to motorists. Use of the auxiliary lanes would allow the inner lanes to be constructed on while the outside lanes are open to the public. Without the auxiliary lanes, the project would take significantly longer to construct.

Most of the existing vegetation and soil would be removed up to the existing Caltrans right-of-way line to make room for the median and the auxiliary lanes. The project would construct retaining walls on the existing Caltrans right of way line to prevent the soil erosion onto the highway. Soundwalls may be also built on the existing Caltrans right of way line at various locations, if warranted.

The project would also construct a pumping plant near the Kerman Branch underpass and another at the Olive Avenue overcrossing. Because the existing freeway is below original ground level, the pumping plants would mechanically drain excess water from the freeway.

Lastly, the existing traffic control systems, traffic signals, loop detectors, and other electrical elements within the project limits would be upgraded.

The project involves the following work at or near the existing bridges within the project limits:

- El Dorado Street overcrossing at post mile 21.46: Remove the existing 4-lane bridge and replace it with a 2-lane bridge.
- Nielsen Avenue undercrossing at post mile 22.13: Widen the existing bridge to construct a new auxiliary lane on the northbound and southbound sides of State Route 99.
- Pacific Avenue overcrossing at post mile 22.39: Remove the existing bridge and construct two cul-de-sacs on Teilman Avenue. A cul-de sac would be constructed near the existing Belmont Memorial Park; the other cul-de-sac would be constructed north of where Teilman Avenue and San Joaquin Valley Railroad intersect.
- Kerman Branch underpass at post mile 22.43: Remove and replace the existing structure. The San Joaquin Valley Railroad crosses over State Route 99 through the Kerman Branch underpass. A shoo-fly structure may be constructed south of the existing Kerman Branch underpass. San Joaquin Valley Railroad would use the shoo-fly while the new underpass is being constructed.
- Belmont Avenue overcrossing at post mile 22.74: Remove and replace the existing structure. The on- and off-ramps at the Belmont Avenue interchange would be removed.
- Olive Avenue interchange at post mile 23.30: Remove the existing structure and replace it with a double roundabout interchange or diverging diamond interchange. See the 'Project Alternatives' section below for information on these interchanges.
- McKinley Avenue undercrossing at post mile 23.90: Widen the existing structure to construct a new auxiliary lane on the northbound and southbound sides of State Route 99. The on- and off-ramps at the McKinley Avenue interchange may be removed. See the 'Project Alternatives' section below for a detailed discussion on this.

At each overcrossing and underpass within the project limits, the project would lower the profile of SR 99, raise the profile of the bridges, or a combination of both to achieve the standard minimum vertical clearance of 16 ½ feet over the freeway.

## Project Alternatives

### Alternative 1a

The existing Olive Avenue interchange would be removed and replaced with a double roundabout interchange. A roundabout would be constructed at the east and west intersections of the Olive Avenue interchange. The existing on- and off-ramps at the interchange would be reconstructed to current design standards. See Figure 3.

The southbound on-ramp and northbound off-ramp at the McKinley Avenue interchange would be removed, which would increase the spacing distance between the remaining interchanges.

**Alternative 1b**
The existing Olive Avenue interchange would be removed and replaced with a double roundabout interchange. A roundabout would be constructed at the east and west intersections of the Olive Avenue interchange. The existing on- and off-ramps at the interchange would be reconstructed to current design standards. See Figure 3.

At the McKinley Avenue interchange, the southbound on-ramp would remain in its existing location; the northbound off-ramp would be removed and relocated about 530 feet north of its existing location. In the new location, the northbound off-ramp would be constructed in a jug-handle design.

**Alternative 2a**
The existing Olive Avenue interchange would be removed and replaced with a diverging diamond interchange. The existing on- and off-ramps at the interchange would be reconstructed to current design standards. See Figure 4.

The southbound on-ramp and northbound off-ramp at the McKinley Avenue interchange would be removed, which would increase the spacing distance between the remaining interchanges.

**Alternative 2b**
The existing Olive Avenue interchange would be removed and replaced with a diverging diamond interchange. The existing on- and off-ramps at the interchange would be reconstructed to current design standards. See Figure 4.

At the McKinley Avenue interchange, the southbound on-ramp would remain in its existing location; the northbound off-ramp would be removed and relocated about 530 feet north of its existing location. In the new location, the northbound off-ramp would be constructed in a jug-handle design.

**Parkway Drive Realignment – Common to all the Build Alternatives**
Constructing the proposed interchanges at Olive Avenue would require the existing local roads southwest of the interchange to be modified. The project would modify Parkway Drive and Crystal Avenue the same way for each build alternative. The existing access point between Olive Avenue and Parkway Drive would be removed and relocated about 400 feet west. A portion of the existing Parkway Drive, from the existing access point to about 400 feet south of the access point, would be realigned and constructed as a frontage road.

The realigned Parkway Drive would construct two driveways to provide access to the following businesses: Super 8 Inn, Days Inn, and Denny's. A third driveway would be constructed on Parkway Drive to provide access to the Park View Mobile Home Park.

The Parkway Drive realignment would relocate several businesses and homes. The purpose of the realignment is to provide an alternative route for trucks to access the Olive Avenue interchange. The realignment would also provide room to construct the proposed Olive Avenue interchange to current design standards. Depending on the existing traffic volumes, the project

may construct a cul-de-sac just south of the existing access point between Olive Avenue and Crystal Avenue.

**Alternative 3 (No-Build Alternative)**
Alternative 3 is the no-build alternative. Per the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, projects are required to compare a no-build alternative to the proposed build alternatives. The no-build alternative would not construct any improvements. The existing facility and its features would not change.

**Potential Environmental Effects**
Based on preliminary surveys and information, Caltrans has identified the following subject areas for analysis in the Environmental Impact Report:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazard Waste and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Cumulative Effects

**Public Scoping Process**
In addition to distributing this Notice of Preparation, Caltrans will conduct a public scoping meeting for the project. The meeting will be held on October 10, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Verdi Club at 2532 North Marks Avenue in Fresno.

Information on the project will be available at the meeting. The public is encouraged to attend the public scoping meeting and submit comments on the proposed project.

## Figures

### Figure 1: Regional Location Map

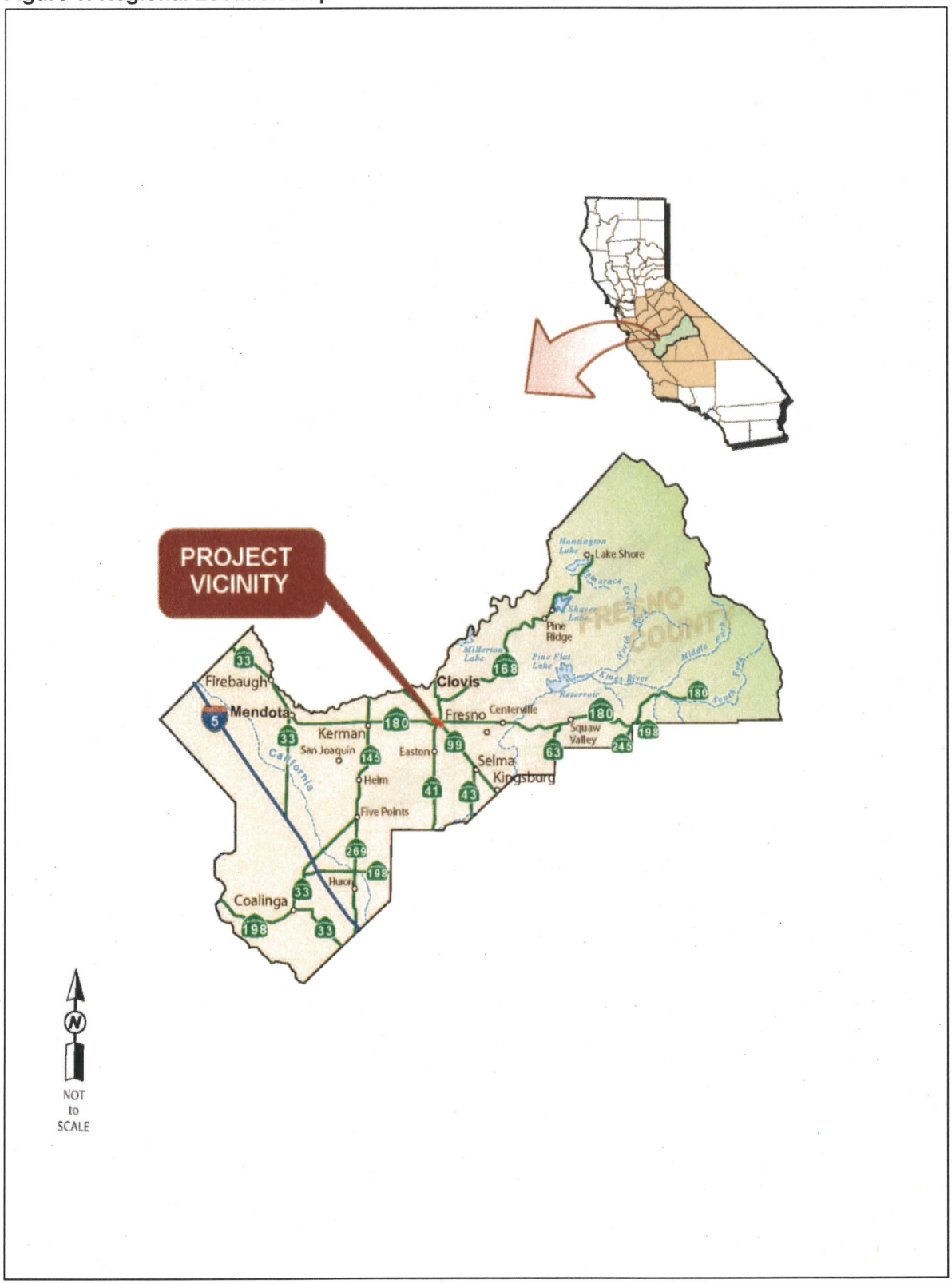

**Figure 2: Local Vicinity Map**

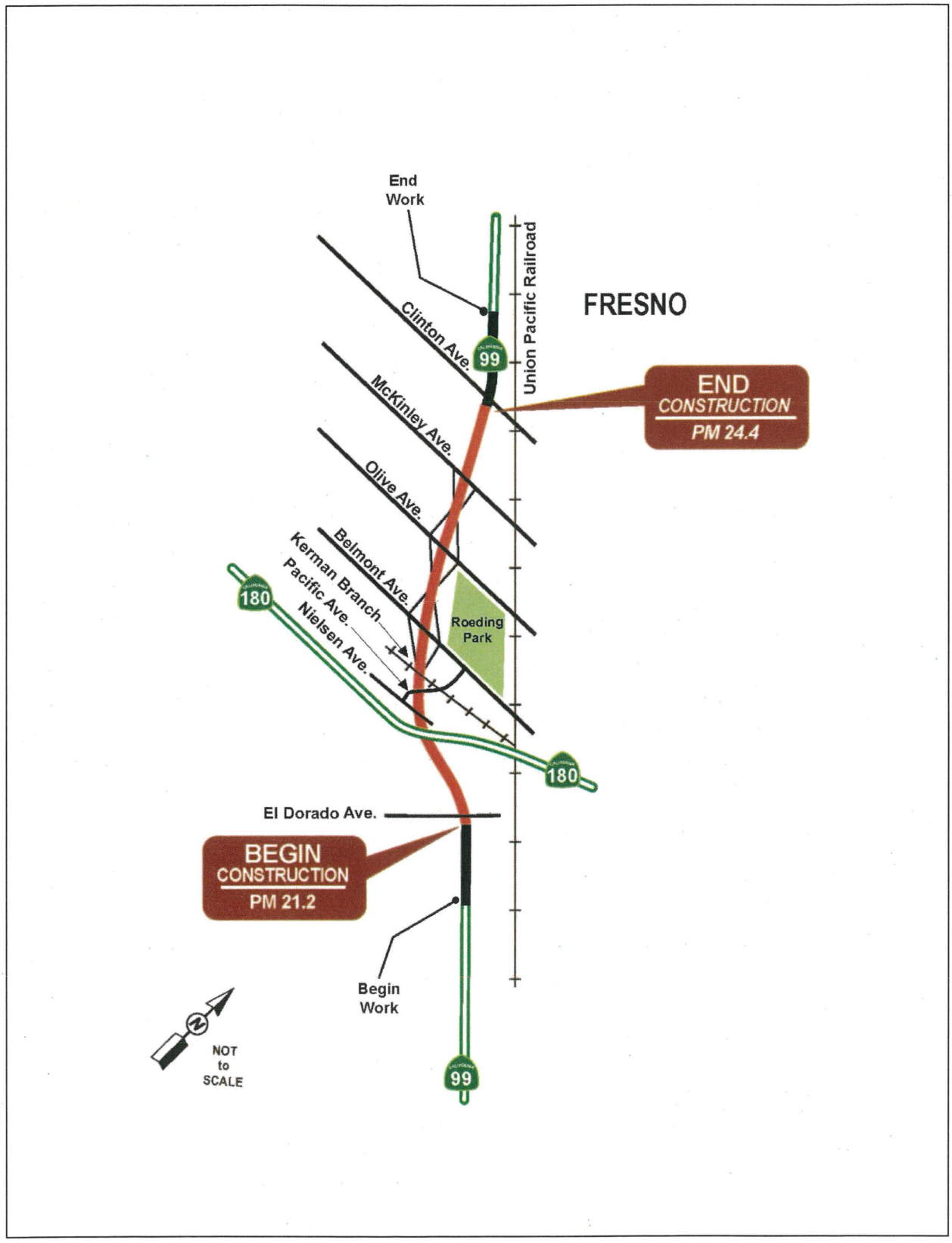

Figure 3: Double Roundabout Interchange

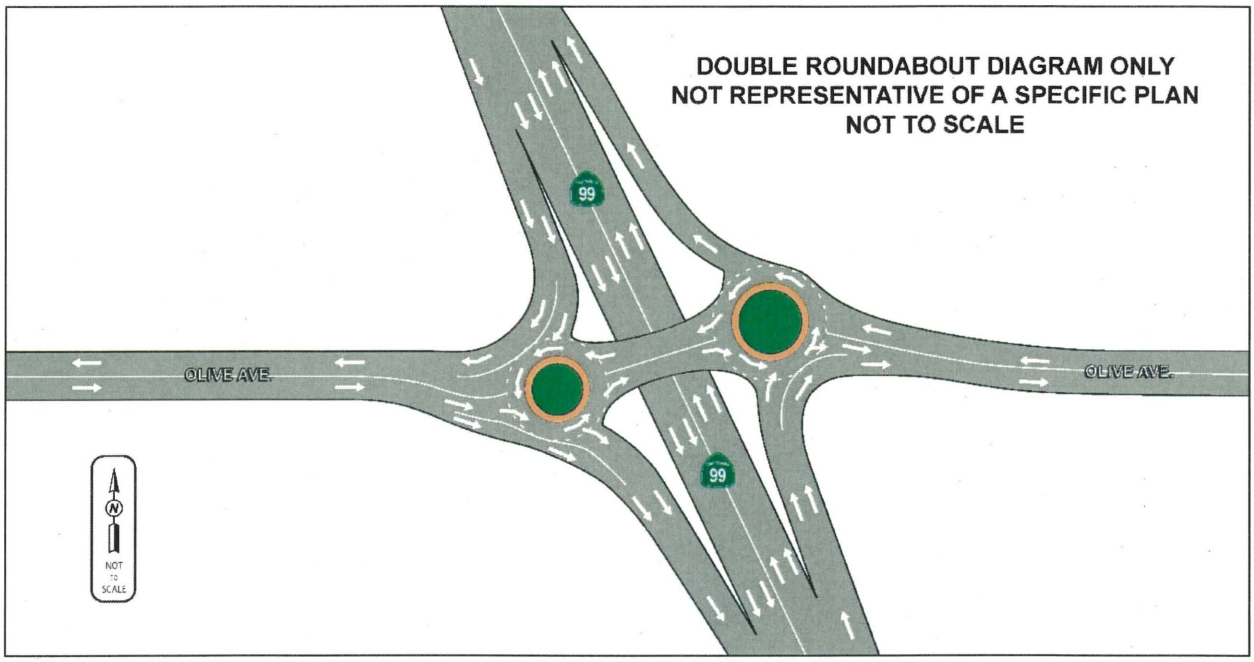


Figure 4: Diverging Diamond Interchange