

SCH NO. \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: <u>Office of Planning and Research</u> <u>1400 Tenth Street, Room 121</u> <u>Sacramento, CA 95814</u>	From: <u>City of Victorville</u> <u>P.O. Box 5001</u> <u>Victorville, CA 92393-5001</u>
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**Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**  
*Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.*

Project Title: Construction of the High Desert Corridor (SR- 18T, Post Mile 15.0/35.9) in the Victor Valley area, eventually linking Victor Valley to the Antelope Valley area.

Project Location: Realignment of State Route (SR) 18 in the Victor Valley area of San Bernardino County, California. The limits of the project are from US 395 in the City of Adelanto to SR 18 (PM 86) near the Town of Apple Valley.

Project Description: Construct nineteen miles of four to six general purpose lanes for a new high capacity limited access facility.

This is to inform you that the City of Victorville and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) are the Co-lead agencies for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project described above. Your participation is requested in the preparation and review of this document.

We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approvals for the project.

A more detailed project description, location map, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials (Attachments 1 and 2).

A copy of the Initial Study ( is) ( is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please direct your response to: Sean McGlade, City Engineer City of Victorville P.O. Box 5001 Victorville, CA 92393-5001 Telephone: (760) 955-5157	with a copy to: Russell Williams Caltrans, District 8 464 W. Fourth St. 6 <sup>th</sup> Floor MS 1163 San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400 Telephone: (909) 383-1554
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Please supply us with the name for a contact person in your agency.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report  
Construction of the High Desert Corridor (SR-18T) in Victor Valley**

The City of Victorville, in conjunction with Caltrans are the Co-lead agencies for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the construction of a portion of the High Desert Corridor in Victor Valley, also identified as the realignment of State Route 18 (SR-18). The City of Victorville and Caltrans, in cooperation with the sponsoring agencies, the County of San Bernardino, the Town of Apple Valley, the City of Adelanto and San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) will work cooperatively to produce the EIR and associated studies. This Notice of Preparation serves as a request for comments from the responsible and trustee agencies regarding environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and reasonable mitigation measures that needs to be discussed in the Draft EIR in order to address each agency's specific concerns in their areas of responsibilities.

**Table A: Potential Responsible and Trustee Agencies**

<b>PERMIT/APPROVALS</b>	<b>APPROVAL AGENCY</b>
<b>LOCAL</b>	
Final EIR Certification	City of Victorville
General Plan Amendment	Cities of Victorville/Adelanto, Town of Apple Valley
Zoning Change	Cities of Victorville/Adelanto, Town of Apple Valley
Specific Plan Amendment	Cities of Victorville/Adelanto, Town of Apple Valley
Other Local Approvals Subdivision Maps Site Plan Reviews Grading and Building Permits Improvement Plans and Permits	City of Victorville City of Adelanto Town of Apple Valley
Consistency Findings with VVEDA Plan	City of Victorville, Victor Valley Economic Development Agency
Roadway and Infrastructure Improvement Plans and Permits	Cities of Victorville/Adelanto, Town of Apple Valley
<b>REGIONAL</b>	
Roadway and Infrastructure Improvement Plans and Permits	County of San Bernardino
Air Quality Permits	Mojave Air Quality Management District
<b>STATE</b>	
State Highway Encroachment Permit	Caltrans
Flood Control Permits	County of San Bernardino
Water Quality Permits (Section 401)	California Regional Water Quality Control board
1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement	California Department of Fish & Game
At-Grade Railway and Roadway Crossings	California Public Utilities Commission
<b>FEDERAL</b>	
Section 404 Permit, Clean Water Act	U.S. Army Corps. Of Engineers
Endangered Species Act Compliance	U.S. Fish Wildlife Service

## **Project Description**

It is proposed to construct a regional high capacity limited access highway (SR-18 T) between US 395 in Adelanto and SR 18 (PM 86) east of Apple Valley a distance of 19 miles. The project will improve mobility, accessibility and safety for east/west travel in Victor Valley. Proposed study limits of the project begin at U.S. 395 in Adelanto and terminate at SR 18 east of Apple Valley. A "No Build" and two "Build" Alternatives are under consideration. Project Alternatives are identical in the section between US 395 and Interstate 15 (I-15). This proposed section follows Air Expressway east past the Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA) and continues east bridging National Trails Highway, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), Mojave River, Bell Mountain Wash and then connects with I-15 north of the Stoddard Wells Road/I-15 Interchange.

The alignment of this section is controlled by the following factors:

1. Utilization of existing Air Expressway Corridor right of way between Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA) and the Federal Prison.
2. Minimize potential impacts to wetlands by crossing the Mojave River at its narrowest location within this reach.
3. Compatibility with Rail spur into SCLA (now under construction).
4. Locating the new I-15/SR 18 interchange in the proximity of Falchion Road as required in the Federal Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) and as dictated by Federal interchange spacing guidelines as applied to I-15. This alignment has been also adopted by the Value Analysis Team as the proper location.
5. Minimizing disturbance to the Edison substations and major power lines in the vicinity.

East of I-15, two different alignments are being considered. Alternative 1 (four-lane freeway/expressway) proceeds east, passing through the saddle south of Bell Mountain where it turns southeast south of the Apple Valley Airport and then heads south paralleling Joshua Road about one-half mile to the east. It then ends at existing SR 18 (PM 86) east of Joshua Road.

Alternative 2 alignment (four-lane limited access highway) diverges from Alternative 1 just east of I-15 where it turns south towards the main part of Apple Valley. It then intersects SR 18 in the vicinity of Rimrock Road where it continues in an easterly direction overlapping existing SR 18 to the common terminus point with Alternative 1 at SR 18 (PM 86).

## **Alternatives Under Consideration**

In addition to the two "Build" Alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) described above, a "No-Build" Alternative (Alternative 3), is under consideration.

## **Scoping Process**

Scoping meetings will be scheduled in Summer, 2007 in the Victor Valley area as needed. Future public informational meetings will be held in Victor Valley in the Summer-Fall of 2007.

Project documents will be available for review on the City of Victorville web site located at [www.ci.victorville.ca.us](http://www.ci.victorville.ca.us), then click on High Desert Corridor. These documents will be updated as the project progresses. When all information has been received and reports completed, a Public Hearing will be scheduled to review results of the studies.

## **Discussion of Potential Impacts**

It is anticipated that potential environmental impacts associated with this project will be avoided, minimized and/or mitigated. The EIR will identify environmental impacts resulting from the construction of this project and will incorporate appropriate environmental mitigation associated with these impacts. Environmental mitigation and conditions will be identified in the EIR for the following specific environmental topics:

### **1. Land Use**

The proposed project's compatibility with surrounding land uses and General Plans and other applicable development plan polices will be discussed in the EIR. Land use impacts for this project are considered low to medium in the cities of Adelanto and Victorville and medium to high in the Town Apple Valley.

### **2. Population, Employment, and Housing**

The EIR will describe the existing demographics of the project area and vicinity and assess the socioeconomic impacts that may be caused by the proposed project, to the extent that they will directly or indirectly result in physical/economic changes to the human environment. Socioeconomics impacts for this project are considered low to medium in the cities of Adelanto and Victorville and medium to high in the Town of Apple Valley.

### **3. Transportation, Circulation and Parking**

The EIR will identify and evaluate existing street and highway conditions and other transportation elements. Planned related local roadway improvements will also be identified. The project's compliance with adopted policies, plans, and programs supporting alternative modes of transportation will also be discussed. Transportation impacts for this project are considered high.

### **4. Air Quality**

Construction and operation of the proposed project will affect vehicular air pollution emissions in the area. The EIR will also discuss compliance with regional and local air quality modeling and plans. Construction-related air quality impacts will be also be discussed. Air Quality impacts for the project are considered low to medium.

### **5. Noise**

The EIR will assess potential noise impacts associated with the project, including impacts to existing developments. Noise levels will be evaluated for consistency with federal, state and city standards and guidelines. Noise impacts for this project are considered low to medium in the cities of Adelanto and Victorville and medium to high in the Town of Apple Valley.

### **6. Biological Resources**

The EIR will describe the existing biological conditions within the project area, and potential impacts of the proposed project on vegetation and wildlife, including special-status species. The EIR will evaluate the likelihood of any significant impacts, including effects on the Mojave River and other potential habitat area. Biological impacts for the project are considered low to medium.

### **7. Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**

The EIR will assess soil and geologic conditions of the project area and address seismic hazards, including the potential for liquefaction, ground-shaking, and soil erosion.

## **8. Hydrology and Water Quality**

The EIR will address any hydrology and water quality impacts that may occur as a result of the project. The analysis will discuss whether water quality and discharge requirements will be met. Drainage patterns could be affected or altered. Hydrology and water quality impacts are considered low to medium.

## **9. Hazardous Materials & Waste**

Historical releases of hazardous materials at or near the site could expose construction workers to hazardous materials during project development, and, if present, hazardous materials, soils and groundwater could potentially affect future workers and users of the project. Hazardous Waste Studies will be conducted for this project. The EIR will include a description of the potential hazards on the site and the health and safety effects of development of the proposed project. Hazardous materials and waste impacts for this project are considered low.

## **10. Cultural and Paleontological Resources**

The EIR will address potential impacts to historic structures, archaeological and paleontological resources. Impacts to Cultural and Paleontological resources for this project are considered low.

## **11. Visual Quality and Aesthetics**

The EIR will describe the existing visual conditions of the project area and address the potential effects on scenic resources or any affect to the existing visual character. Visual quality and aesthetic impacts for this project are considered low to medium.

## **12. Utilities**

The development of the proposed project will affect existing utilities and infrastructure systems, including electricity, water supply; sanitary sewer/wastewater treatment and telecommunications. The EIR will discuss the potential for adverse impacts to public utilities (gas, water, electricity, solid waste, and wastewater). Potential impacts to public utilities include direct impacts where the transportation improvements may require relocation of existing utilities. Impacts to utilities for this project are considered medium to high.

## **13. Public Services and Facilities**

The EIR will identify existing police, fire, and other public services serving the project area, and will quantify the increase in service demands resulting from the proposed project. The availability and adequacy of existing services will be analyzed. Mitigation measures will be identified for any significant impacts to public facilities and services. Impacts to public services and facilities are considered low to medium.

## **14. Energy**

The EIR will qualitatively describe potential impacts associated with increased/decreased energy demand due to the project. Energy impacts for the project are considered low to medium.

## **15. Consistency with Plans and Policies**

This section of the EIR will summarize project consistency with regional and city plans and policies relevant to the project area. Impacts with regional and city plans for the project are considered medium to high.

## **16. Cumulative and Growth Inducing Impacts**

This analysis will cover all appropriate environmental topics discussed in the EIR and will specify which areas are anticipated to result in cumulative impacts.

## **17. Goods Movement**

The project is expected to bring about a major rerouting of east-west goods movement by truck in Victor Valley. The project is planned as a limited access facility and will be designed to accommodate heavy duty trucks. The EIR will identify alternative routes and proposed access points for the facility. Goods movement impact by truck for the project is considered medium to high.

## **18. Railroads**

The proposed project will cross three separate railroad lines in the vicinity of National Trails Road and Air Expressway, (SCLA rail spur, BNSF Railway, and Mojave Northern Railroad). Rail crossing designs will be closely coordinated with the rail line owners.

## **19. Parks/Recreation and Section 4(f) Resources**

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (now at 49 USC 303) specifies that publicly owned public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or any significant historic site may not be used for projects that use federal funds unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land.

The project will incorporate all possible planning to minimize harm to 4(f) lands. The EIR will include an evaluation of potential impacts to 4(f) resources that could result from implementation of the project. Impacts for the project are expected to range from minimum to low.

## **20. Community Impact Assessment (Environmental Justice and Relocation Impact)**

A Community Impact Assessment will be prepared to address the potential community and socioeconomic impacts of the proposed project. The analysis will be conducted to determine potential socioeconomic impacts of the project, with an emphasis on compliance with Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice. The Community Impact Assessment will provide a description of existing land use, housing, employment, and population conditions in the vicinity of the project alternatives. The impact analysis will address the potential impacts on the residential population and local business community within the project impact for each alternative, including land use compatibility impacts associated with the project. A draft Relocation Impact Report will be prepared to document displacements of homes and business. The analysis of land use will assess the impact of each alternative on Farmland found on the east end of the project in Apple Valley. Discussions on Environmental Justice, right-of-way-displacement, relocation assistance, business impacts, neighborhood cohesion, and fiscal impacts will be included in the EIR. The analysis shall also address consistency with relevant local, regional, and state regulations and plans. Community impacts for this project are considered low to medium in the cities of Adelanto and Victorville and medium to high in the Town of Apple Valley.

## **21. Construction Impacts**

Construction activity may result in both short-term air pollution impacts and short-term increase in noise levels. This will be assessed during the DEIR stage. Construction impacts are expected to range from high to medium for the project.

## **22. Traffic Study**

While the proposed project is expected to have a beneficial effect on regional traffic circulation, the EIR will analyze the effect of the alternatives on both regional and local traffic conditions. Adverse impacts may occur on other facilities where traffic volumes are increased as a result of any changes in local circulation resulting from the project.

## **23. Wetland Study**

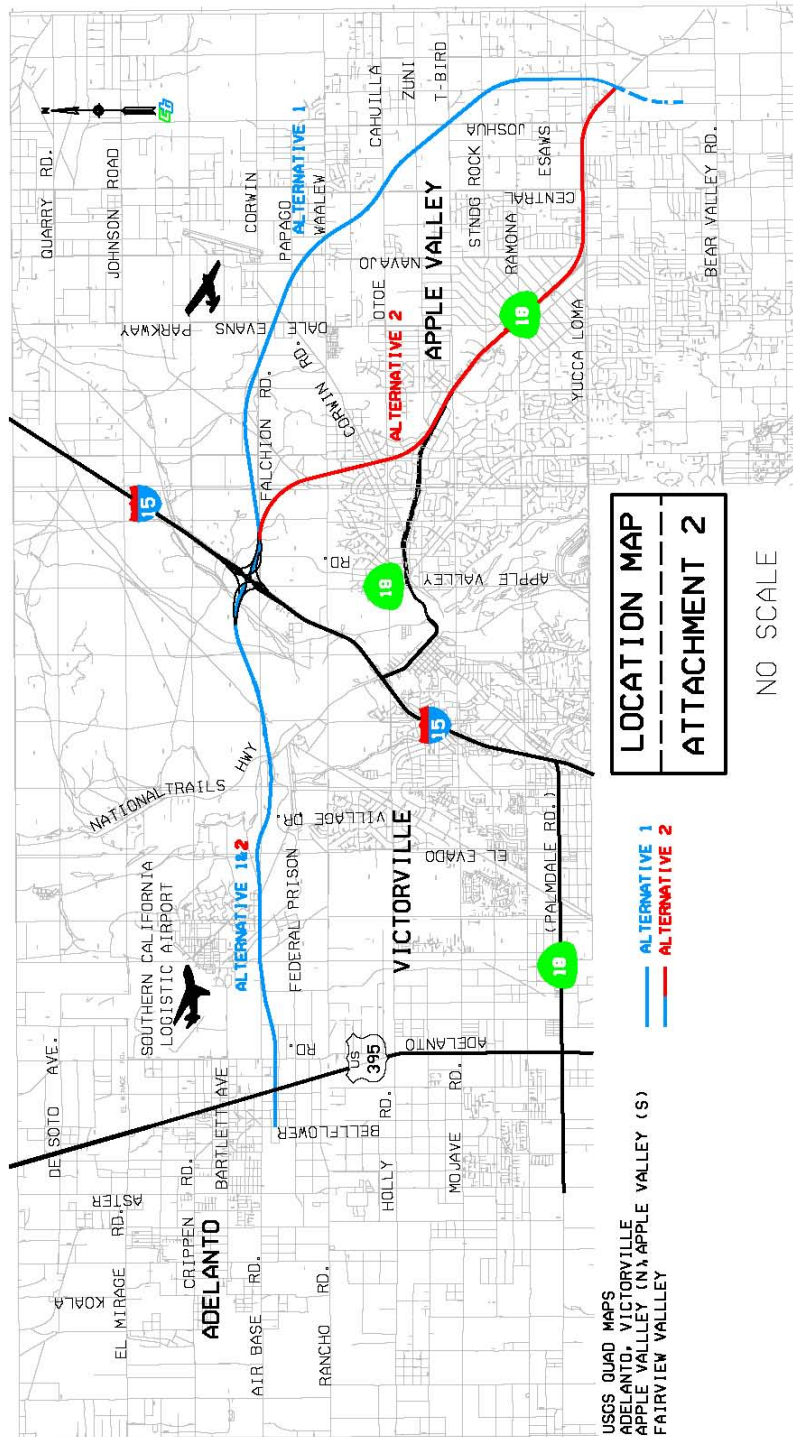
Wetlands studies will be centered primarily on the Upper and Lower Mojave River Narrows areas, and secondarily in the area of Apple Valley Dry Lake. Biological and ecological studies will be conducted by the appropriate teams to determine what impacts may be recognized and mitigated. Impacts to the wetlands by this project are expected to be low to medium.

## **24. Flood Plain Report**

The proposed project will affect floodplains, particularly for the Mojave River and Apple Valley Dry Lake and their contributing washes and tributaries. The various aspects of the surrounding floodplain will be documented in the EIS/EIR, including an evaluation of potential impacts, encroachments, and proposed solutions. Floodplains will be determined by the latest available Flood Insurance Rate Maps for unincorporated and incorporated areas of San Bernardino County. Potential impacts could include loss of beneficial floodplains values resulting from grading or other constructions activities. Impacts for this project are considered low to medium.

## **25. Water Resources**

The High Desert Corridor project will be evaluated with respect to its potential effects on the waters of the U.S. and the State. The evaluation will be predicted upon the potential effect of the Mojave River and the surrounding groundwater, and how any impacts can be alleviated and mitigated. Certain design features (e.g., the use of bridges instead of culverts to span flood channels where appropriate), will be of prime consideration in the EIR, in order to reduce the impact. Potential impacts to these water resources include direct impacts such as dredging or filling of streams, rivers, and lakes, as well as indirect effects to water resources resulting from increased runoff from impervious surfaces such as roads and bridges. Effects on more regional watershed and groundwater levels, local contamination, and other runoff mitigation, will be assessed using available data from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the San Bernardino County Flood Control District. Impacts for this project are considered low to medium.



USGS QUAD MAPS  
 ADELANTO, VICTORVILLE  
 APPLE VALLEY (N) APPLE VALLEY (S)  
 FAIRVIEW VALLEY

ALTERNATIVE 1  
 ALTERNATIVE 2

**LOCATION MAP**  
**ATTACHMENT 2**

NO SCALE