

# **Executive Summary**

## **Notice of Preparation and Initial Study**

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### **Washington Boulevard Improvement Project Commerce, California**



**City of Commerce  
Community Development Department  
2535 Commerce Way  
Commerce, California 90040**

**December 26, 2008**

## Table of Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Project Location .....	3
3. Environmental Setting .....	3
4. Project Description .....	3
5. Project Objectives.....	7
6. Discretionary Actions.....	7
7. Initial Study Checklist .....	7

## Section 1. Introduction

The City of Commerce is proposing to undertake a number of roadway improvements to Washington Boulevard. The proposed roadway improvement project is located entirely within the City of Commerce. The portion of Washington Boulevard that is subject to the proposed improvements extends from a point located 350 feet west of Indiana Street continuing easterly to the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway. The project area (also referred to as the *affected area* or the *area of potential affect*) has a linear length of 2.8 miles. As part of the project's environmental review, the City of Commerce authorized the preparation of the attached Initial Study.

The proposed Washington Boulevard Improvement Project is one element of a larger transportation and congestion-relief initiative supported by Proposition 1B, [the] Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, and Port Security Legislative Bond Act. This Act provides for safety improvements and repairs to State highways, upgrades to freeways as a means to reduce congestion, the repair of local streets and roads, the upgrading of highways along major transportation corridors, various seismic safety improvements to local bridges, the expansion of public transit, the completion of the State's network of car pool lanes, the reduction of air pollution, and the improvement of anti-terrorism security at shipping ports.

## 2. Project Location

The proposed roadway improvement project is located entirely within the City of Commerce. The portion of Washington Boulevard that is subject to the proposed improvements extend from a point located 350 feet west of Indiana Street continuing easterly to the Santa Ana (I-5) Freeway. The project area has a linear length of 2.8 miles.

The City of Commerce is located approximately 6 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles and is bounded by the City of Montebello on the east, unincorporated East Los Angeles on the north, the cities of Vernon, Bell, and Maywood on the west, and the City of Bell Gardens on the south. The location of the City of Commerce in a regional context is shown in Exhibit 1. The project area's location in the City is shown in Exhibit 2. Finally, a vicinity map is provided in Exhibit 3.

## 3. Environmental Setting

Washington Boulevard is a major highway that varies in pavement width (curb-to-curb) from 67 feet to 80 feet within Commerce. The roadway's right-of-way (ROW) width varies from 75 feet to 100 feet. There

are currently two travel lanes in each direction. The average daily traffic (ADT) volumes range from 29,900 to 35,600.<sup>1</sup>

There are two travel lanes in each direction with a center median and left-turn pockets. Parking is allowed but restricted on the roadway's south side, and the north side from Ayers Avenue to the I-5 Freeway. Parking is also prohibited on the north side of the roadway from 350 feet west of Indiana Street to Ayers Avenue.

## 4. Project Description

The proposed project involves the reconstruction of the Washington Boulevard roadway surface as well as other ancillary improvements. The existing deteriorating roadway surface is largely covered over in asphalt surfaces that represent a hazard to vehicles using the roadway due to its surface's deteriorating condition. The roadway surface will be reconstructed in concrete as a means to extend the surface life of the roadway.

Specific improvements may include, but not be limited to, street and highway pavement maintenance, rehabilitation, installation, construction and reconstruction of necessary associated facilities such as drainage and traffic control devices, or the maintenance, rehabilitation, installation, construction and reconstruction public transit facilities, safety projects, or as a local match to obtain state or federal transportation funds for similar purposes.

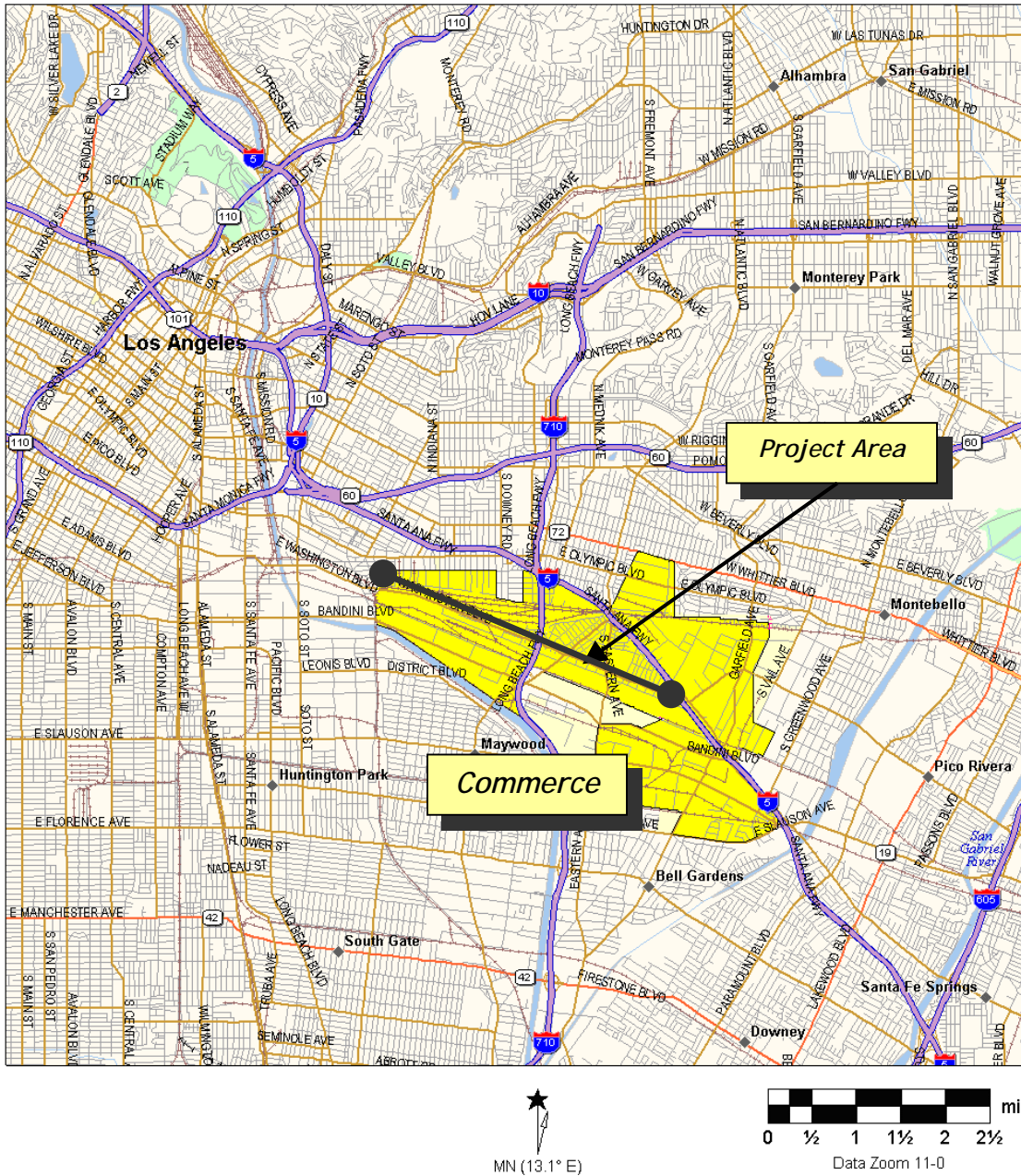
This project will also facilitate a curb-to-curb width of at least 84 feet between the faces of the curbs. This will permit the addition of a single additional travel lane in each direction (three travel lanes in each direction). The proposed improvements will also correct existing turning radius and repair damaged medians. Traffic signals and streetlights will be upgraded, and sidewalks damaged by landscaping will be repaired. Finally, a landscaped median will be constructed in those areas where there is adequate ROW to accommodate such a median.

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<sup>1</sup> Thurow, Jim (Consultant, Design Section. *Project Design Concept [for] Washington Boulevard (Memorandum to Sree Kumary)*. January 10, 2007

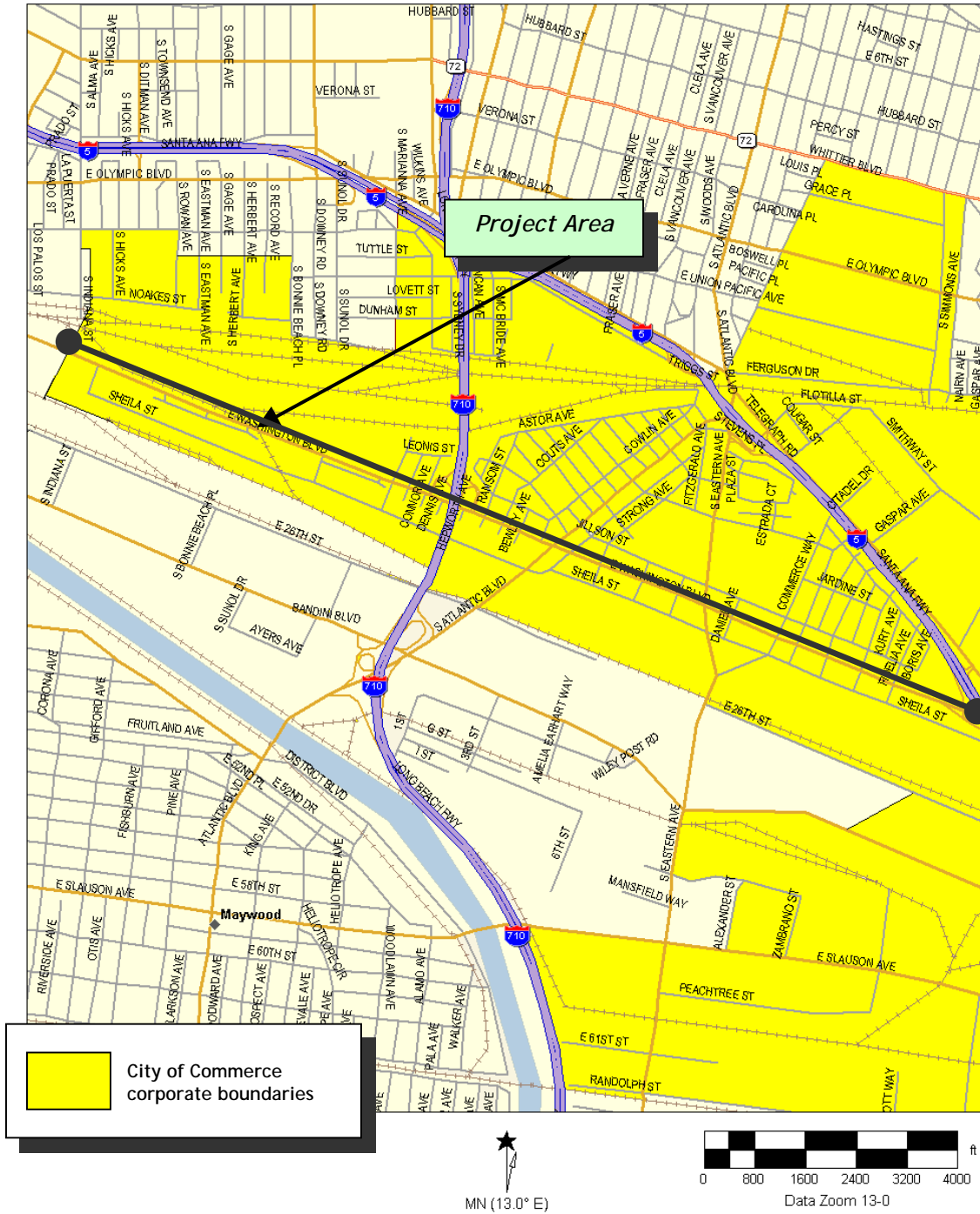


**Executive Summary • Notice of Preparation/Initial Study  
Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**



**Exhibit 2**  
**Project Location in Commerce**  
Source: Delorme 2006

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Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**



**Exhibit 3  
Vicinity Map**  
Source: Delorme 2006

COMM 078 • December 2008

## 5. Project Objectives

The improvements contemplated for Washington Boulevard are specifically aimed at repairing and upgrading the existing deteriorated roadway. The Washington Boulevard roadway segment in Commerce (west of the I-5 Freeway) represents the major remaining link of the roadway that consists of two travel lanes in each direction. The Washington Boulevard segments in Pico Rivera, Montebello, and Commerce located east of the I-5 Freeway consist of three travel lanes in each direction. In addition, the obsolete and deteriorating condition of the roadway is leading to traffic hazards and further congestion. Finally, obsolete and inadequate pedestrian facilities, signals, and rail crossings require upgrading to current standards. The City seeks to accomplish the following objectives with the proposed project:

- To improve the Washington Boulevard roadway so that it meets the City’s current design standards;
- To ensure that Washington Boulevard can safely and efficiently accommodate traffic demands; and,
- To repair damage that has occurred over the past several decades and to improve the roadway’s overall appearance.

## 6. Discretionary Actions

A discretionary decision is an action taken by a government agency (for this project, the government agency is the City of Commerce) that calls for an exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve a project. The proposed project will require the following discretionary approvals from the City:

- The approval of the Mitigation Monitoring Program; and
- The certification of the Final EIR.

## 7 Initial Study Checklist

The attached Initial Study analyses the project’s potential environmental impacts for a wide range of issue areas. The project’s potential impacts, along with the conclusions of the environmental analysis, are summarized in the Initial Study Checklist (Table 1) provided below and on the following pages.

**Table 1  
Initial Study Checklist**

Environmental Issues Area Examined	Analysis in EIR Required	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>LAND USE</b>				
a) Would the project physically divide an established community, or otherwise result in an incompatible land use?				X
b) Would the project conflict with an applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X
c) Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X
d) Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
e) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X

**Executive Summary • Notice of Preparation/Initial Study  
Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

**Table 1  
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f) Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, may result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use?				X
<b>POPULATION AND HOUSING</b>				
a) Would the project induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?				X
b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
c) Would the project displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X
<b>TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION</b>				
a) Would the project cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	X			
b) Would the project exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	X			
c) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to the design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
d) Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?	X			
e) Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?	X			
f) Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X
g) Would the project result in waterborne or air traffic impacts?				X
h) Would the project result in hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?				X
<b>EARTH RESOURCES AND GEOLOGY</b>				
a) Would the project result in the risk of loss or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area, or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault rupture?				X
b) Would the project result in substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking or seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X

**Executive Summary • Notice of Preparation/Initial Study  
Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

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c) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X
d) Would the project result in locating a project on a geologic unit or a soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				X
e) Would the project result in locating a project on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				X
f) Would the project result in locating a project on soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				X
g) Would the project result in locating a project on Unique geologic or physical features?				X
<b>WATER AND HYDROLOGY</b>				
a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?				X
b) Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge in such a way that would cause a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level?				X
c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?				X
d) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?				X
e) Would the project create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?				X
f) Would the project substantially degrade water quality?				X
g) Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				X
h) Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area, structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?				X
i) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of flooding as a result of dam or levee failure?				X
j) Would the project result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				X

**Executive Summary • Notice of Preparation/Initial Study  
Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

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Environmental Issues Area Examined	Analysis in EIR Required	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>				
a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	X			
c) Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	X			
d) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	X			
e) Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X
f) Would the project alter air movement, moisture, or temperature, or cause any change in climate?				X
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>				
a) Would the project result in significant impacts on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
b) Would the project result in significant impacts on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				X
c) Would the project result in significant impacts on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				X
d) Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory life corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				X
e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	X			
f) Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				X
<b>ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES</b>				
a) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X

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Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

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Environmental Issues Area Examined	Analysis in EIR Required	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?				X
c) Would the project conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?				X
d) Would the project use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?				X
<b>RISK OF UPSET AND HUMAN HEALTH</b>				
a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
b) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment or result in reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				X
c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X
e) Would the project be located within an airport land use plan, or where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or a public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) Would the project, within the vicinity of a private airstrip, result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				X
g) Would the project impair implementation of, or physically interfere with, an adopted emergency response plan or emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
h) Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wild land fire, including where wild lands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wild lands?				X
<b>NOISE</b>				
a) Would the project result in exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	X			
b) Would the project result in exposure of people to or generation of excessive ground-borne noise levels?	X			

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Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

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c) Would the project result in substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above noise levels existing without the project?	X			
d) Would the project result in substantial temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	X			
e) Would the project result in, for a project located with an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
f) Would the project result in for a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				X
<b>PUBLIC SERVICES</b>				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives on fire protection services?				X
b) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives on police protection services?				X
c) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives on school services?				X
d) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives on library facilities?				X
e) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which would cause significant environmental impacts in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives on other governmental services?				X
<b>UTILITIES</b>				
a) Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				X

**Executive Summary • Notice of Preparation/Initial Study  
Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

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b) Would the project require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts?				X
c) Would the project require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
d) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				X
e) Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				X
f) Would the project be served by a landfill with insufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				X
g) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X
h) Would the project result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations in power or natural gas facilities?				X
i) Would the project result in a need for new systems, or substantial alterations in communication systems?				X
<b>AESTHETICS</b>				
a) Would the project affect a scenic vista?				X
b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?				X
c) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?				X
b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines?				X
c) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X
d) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X

**Executive Summary • Notice of Preparation/Initial Study  
Washington Boulevard Improvement Project**

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e) Would the project have the potential to cause a physical change that would affect unique ethnic cultural values?				X
f) Would the project impact an existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?				X
<b>RECREATION</b>				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Affect existing recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</b>				
a) Would the project result in any significant adverse environmental justice impacts?				X

