

# Yucca Loma Road/Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard Transportation Project

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## *Addendum to the Final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration*



*Town of Apple Valley  
Engineering Department  
May 2013*

Yucca Loma Road/Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard Transportation Project

ADDENDUM  
TO THE  
FINAL INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

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## Introduction

The Town of Apple Valley and the California Department of Transportation propose to establish a new route across the Mojave River between the Town of Apple Valley, County of San Bernardino, and City of Victorville, California. The Project will widen Yucca Loma Road from Apple Valley Road to its current terminus east of Kasanka Trail, construct a new bridge crossing over the Mojave River extending to Yates Road, widen Yates Road, realign the Ridgecrest Road/Yates Road intersection, and construct an extension of Green Tree Boulevard from the new Ridgecrest Road/Yates Road intersection with a bridge over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad to Hesperia Road by following one of two alternate alignments. This proposed action constitutes a "Project" in accordance with CEQA.

## Background

The proposed Project will provide a new route across the Mojave River and BNSF Railroad between the Town of Apple Valley, County of San Bernardino, and City of Victorville. The eastern limit of the Project is at the intersection of Yucca Loma Road and Apple Valley Road. The western limit is at the intersection of Green Tree Boulevard and Hesperia Road. The current alignment of the Project has been planned in the County of San Bernardino and Town of Apple Valley General Plans for over 40 years.

## Project Description

The proposed Project will widen Yucca Loma Road from two to four lanes from Apple Valley Road to its current terminus east of Kasanka Trail. A new bridge crossing over the Mojave River ("Yucca Loma Bridge") will be constructed extending the roadway from Yucca Loma Road to Yates Road. This bridge will be built wide enough for an ultimate build out use of six lanes, but will be striped for four lanes. The bridge will also have shoulders and sidewalks. Space for sidewalk will be allowed on both sides of Yucca Loma Road; however, it is anticipated sidewalk will only be built on one side of the street as part of this Project. A new signal with crosswalks is planned at Havasu Road.

Yates Road will be widened from two lanes to four lanes. From Fortuna Lane to Park Road roadway widening is necessary. From Park Road to Ridgecrest Road, Yates Road is currently built wide enough for four lanes, but has been striped and used for two lanes of traffic. Pavement rehabilitation and restriping is needed throughout Yates Road and as it connects to Ridgecrest Road, which will be realigned to the west to allow connection to an extension of Green Tree Boulevard. A bicycle path is planned along the north side of Yates Road, connecting from the bridge over the Mojave River to Ridgecrest Road and Green Tree Boulevard.

Ridgecrest Road will be realigned from approximately 500 feet (ft) south of Chinquapin Drive to a new intersection at Yates Road and the extension of Green Tree Boulevard. Signals are planned at the new intersection and sidewalks will be constructed along the three streets.

Green Tree Boulevard will be extended with four through travel lanes from the new Ridgecrest Road/Yates Road intersection to Hesperia Road by following one of two alternate alignments. The Green Tree Boulevard south alignment, Alternative A, is centered on the existing property Section Line boundary and impacts four single family residential parcels located between the railroad right-of-way and

Hesperia Road. Alternative B, the Green Tree Boulevard north alignment, shifts the roadway approximately 150 ft to the north, avoiding the four single family residential parcels. New access roads will maintain access to the four parcels. Grading will allow for sidewalk to be built on both sides of the roadway; however, construction of sidewalks is anticipated to occur as development in the area occurs. Both Green Tree Boulevard alignment alternatives require the construction of a new bridge over the BNSF railroad which will also be striped for four lanes and include sidewalks.

Soundwalls are proposed to abate noise impacts associated with the Project. The soundwalls will be constructed if the local jurisdictions and a majority of the affected residents vote in favor of them.

Various utility relocations and realignments will be necessary throughout the Project. Both Alternative A and Alternative B will provide Class II bicycle lanes and sidewalks throughout the entire Project alignment.

To control access to the Spring Valley Lake community, portions of Yates Road will have a center divider. Only right-in and right-out turning movements will be permitted for general traffic at Tahoe Lane and Fortuna Lane.

The project will be constructed as a complete roadway from Apple Valley Road to Hesperia Road; however, construction of the project in two phases may be necessary to align project costs with available funding. As part of phase one, the entire roadway corridor would be graded for full project build-out and the two bridges would be built to full size, but the roadway would initially be paved and striped as a two lane roadway. Bicycle lanes, pedestrian facilities, and intersection improvements would be included with phase one. Phase two is expected to be driven by increases in traffic and would construct, pave, and stripe for the full four lane facility. Construction of phase one is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2014 and take four to five years to complete, while phase two is anticipated to take one to two years once started.

The first project phase is projected to cost approximately \$65 million and the three jurisdictions have initiated a joint funding agreement for its construction. This initial funding agreement outlines existing and potential funding sources for construction to complete the entire two lane facility from Apple Valley Road to Hesperia Road. Existing funding sources include \$13 million in Town of Apple Valley Redevelopment Agency bond funds, \$8 million in San Bernardino County Measure I funds, \$8 million in SLPP funds programmed by SANBAG, and \$1 million in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds. In addition, the agencies have identified developer impact fees, Measure I sales tax, and Proposition 1B funds as likely sources for the balance of phase one costs. As traffic in the region increases over the subsequent 20 years, construction of the full four lane facility would be needed. Developer impact fees are anticipated as the funding source for phase two at a cost of approximately \$15 million.

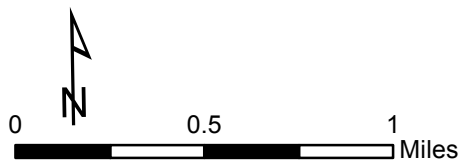
Large transportation projects often must be built using multiple construction packages. Phase one is large and complex enough that multiple construction packages are likely. Construction packages will be planned during design and right-of-way acquisition activities, as environmental constraints, construction requirements, and site conditions dictate. The first set of construction packages is anticipated to include the Yucca Loma Bridge over the Mojave River, soundwalls along Yucca Loma Road and Yates Road,

intersection modifications, and other improvements from Apple Valley Road to Ridgecrest Road. They would be followed by the construction of the BNSF railroad bridge and the extension of Green Tree Boulevard, completing phase one. Phase one construction is expected to be completed in 36 months. See Figure 1 for Project Location.





Dokken Engineering, 2009; Created by: T. Chamberlain



**FIGURE 1**  
**Project Location**  
 Yucca Loma Road/Yates Road/Greentree Boulevard Transportation Improvement Project  
 Parkland Conversion  
 Wildlife Conservation Board, Town of Apple Valley

## **Summary of Existing CEQA Documentation**





In December of 2010, the Town of Apple Valley, acting as lead agency, completed a Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Yucca Loma Road/Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard Transportation Project. In January of 2011, a Final MND was adopted by the Town of Apple Valley. The Final MND addressed potential environmental effects of the project with regard to the following issues: 1) Human Environment, 2) Physical Environment, 3) Biological Environment, 4) Cumulative Impacts, and 5) Climate Change (CEQA).

Potentially significant impacts were identified in the Final MND and were reduced to less than significant levels with the application of mitigation measures identified in the Final MND.

## **Proposed Modifications to Yucca Loma Road/Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard Transportation Project**

The proposed project description, in terms of the proposed improvements, has not changed since the 2011 Final Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration; however, in March of 2011, it was discovered that the State-owned parcels, located at the County-leased Mojave Narrows Regional Park, from which the local agencies will be acquiring a portion of for the Project, were originally purchased using Land and Water Conservation Funds. To comply with Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF), the Project proceeded with preparing a Proposal Description/Environmental Screening Form (PD/ESF) for areas to be acquired. The State Wildlife Conservation Board, acting as the land agent for the State, was the conversion proponent since they were the LWCF grant recipient. The conversion proposal was submitted to National Park Service as the NEPA lead agency under Section 6(f) and as the administrators of the LWCF, which addressed the project's conversion of 7.32 AC of parkland from the Mojave Narrows Regional Park to Town and County owned public roadway right of way. The conversion proposal also includes replacing the lost parkland with portions private land located adjacent to the existing park boundary (APNs 0480-021-032, 0479-131-07 and 0480-031-03). None of the areas proposed for conversion or replacement have any developed recreational facilities, therefore the project proponents determined that a replacement of natural land would satisfy the reasonably equivalent recreational usefulness requirement. Since the replacement land would only undergo a transfer of title, no environmental impacts are expected and none of the potential parcels would be a superior option environmentally. Only minor technical changes to the previous CEQA document were necessary, no changes needed or were made to the environmental setting, circumstances, mitigation measures, or commitments. See Figure 2 for illustration of the Section 6(f) Environmental Clearance.



-  Parkland Replacement Environmental Clearance
-  Existing Mojave Narrows Park Boundary
-  Transportation Improvement Project Area
-  Parcels

**PORTIONS OF 473-183-22**

**PORTIONS OF 473-183-21**

**PORTIONS OF 480-021-32**

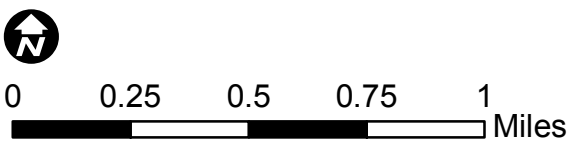
**PORTIONS OF 479-131-07**

**480-031-03**

**Transportation Project Area**

V:\1688\_Yucca Loma\1688 Environmental Clearance-11-16-11.mxd

Source: Bing Maps Hybrid 2011; Dokken Engineering 11/16/2011; Created by: T. Chamberlain



**Figure 2 - Section 6(f) Environmental Clearance**  
 Yucca Loma Road/Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard Transportation Improvement Project Parkland Conversion  
 National Park Service  
 Town of Apple Valley, County of San Bernardino, California



## Appropriate CEQA Documentation for the Proposed Modifications

In accordance with Section 15164(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines, "An addendum to an adopted negative declaration may be prepared if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration have occurred." Specifically, these conditions include:

1. Substantial changes proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or
3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time of the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
  - A. The project will have one or more significant effects on discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;
  - B. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
  - C. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
  - D. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

In order to utilize an addendum as the appropriate CEQA document for the proposed modifications to the Project, the Town of Apple Valley, as the lead agency, must make a finding that changes to the Final MND are necessary and that the project would not result in any new significant or more severe environmental effects than that previously identified in the 2011 Final MND.

## Environmental Analysis

As previously stated, potentially significant impacts were identified in the 2011 Final MND with respect to Generation of Noise, Loss of Sensitive Wildlife and Plant Habitat, as well as Flooding and Water Quality. The modification to the project area are for a transfer of land ownership only and does not result in any new or more severe impacts to these topical areas and no ground disturbance action on the land is proposed. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the 2011 Final MND would reduce these potentially significant impacts to below a level of significance. These mitigation measures, as applicable, would continue to be part of the approved project proposal and will be incorporated into the new construction methods, as modified. The 2011 Final MND identified that all

other environmental topical areas were determined to have a less than significant impact or no impact as a result of the project.

## Determination of Appropriate CEQA Documentation

### Section 15162 - Subsequent EIRs and Negative Declarations

- a) "When an EIR has been certified or a negative declaration adopted for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in light of the whole record, one of more of the following:"
  - 1) "Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;"

The Town of Apple Valley proposes to modify the project, as described in this Addendum to the adopted 2011 Final MND. Specifically, the Town proposes to maintain the project description, but incorporate a transfer of title for the replacement properties as part of the required Section 6(f) LWCF Parkland Conversion Proposal, no new or more severe significant environmental effects would occur.

- 2) "Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or"

The proposed change would result in a transfer of title only as part of the Project identified in the 2011 Final MND, and would not extend into areas that were not previously evaluated for environmental effects. No major revisions to the 2011 Final MND are required, and the proposed modifications would not result in new significant environmental effects.

- 3) "New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
  - A) "The project will have one or more significant environmental effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;"

No new significant environmental effects were identified compared to those identified in the adopted 2011 Final MND.

- B) "Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;"

Potentially significant impacts previously discussed in the prior MND would not be increased or made more severe as a result of this project. Transfer of title for the replacement properties would not result in new or more severe significant impacts.

- C) "Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or"

Not applicable. No mitigation measures or evaluated alternatives were previously found to be infeasible in the adopted 2011 Final MND.

- D) "Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative."

Impacts have been avoided to the extent feasible and mitigated to a level of less than significant. No other mitigation measures or feasible alternatives have been identified that would substantially reduce impacts.

- b) "If changes to a project or its circumstances occur or new information becomes available after adoption of a negative declaration, the lead agency shall prepare a subsequent EIR if required under subsection (a). Otherwise, the lead agency shall determine whether to prepare a subsequent negative declaration, an addendum, or no further documentation."

The project has not changed, nor has its circumstances. The additional transfer of title for the replacement parcels is the only item that has changed since the 2011 Final MND and is described in this Addendum. Based on the discussion in this document, the proposed change would not result in new or more severe significant environmental effects. None of the conditions listed under subsection (a) would occur that would require preparation of a subsequent EIR or MND.

- c) "Once a project has been approved, the lead agency's role in project approval is completed, unless further discretionary approval on that project is required. Information appearing after an approval does not require reopening of that approval. If after the project is approved, any of the conditions described in subsection (a) occurs, a subsequent EIR or negative declaration shall only be prepared by the public agency which grants the next discretionary approval for the project, if any. In this situation no other Responsible Agency shall grant an approval for the project until the subsequent EIR has been certified or subsequent negative declaration adopted."

None of the conditions listed in subsection (a) would occur due to the proposed modifications. No subsequent negative declaration is required.



## Section 15164 - Addendum to an EIR or Negative Declaration

- a) "The lead agency or responsible agency shall prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary, but none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred."

This section of the State CEQA Guidelines does not apply, as an EIR was not prepared for the proposed Project.

- b) "An addendum to an adopted negative declaration may be prepared if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary or none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration have occurred."

Minor alterations to the project description of the adopted 2011 Final MND are necessary; however, none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR would occur as a result of the proposed modifications. Therefore, an addendum to the adopted 2011 Final MND is the appropriate CEQA document for the proposed project modifications.

- c) "An addendum need not be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the final EIR or adopted negative declaration."

This Addendum will be attached to the 2011 Final MND and maintained in the administrative record files at the Town of Apple Valley offices.

- d) "The decision-making body shall consider the addendum with the final EIR or adopted negative declaration prior to making a decision on the project."

The Town of Apple Valley will consider this Addendum with the 2011 Final MND prior to making future decisions on the proposed project.

- e) "A brief explanation of the decision not to prepare a subsequent EIR pursuant to Section 15162 should be included in an addendum to an EIR, the lead agency's required findings on the project, or elsewhere in the record. The explanation must be supported by substantial evidence."

This document provides substantial evidence for the Town of Apple Valley to support the decision to prepare an Addendum for the proposed project modifications.

## Conclusion

This Addendum has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the State CEQA Guidelines and it documents that none of the conditions or circumstances that would require preparation of a subsequent EIR or MND, pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15164 of the State CEQA guidelines, exist in connection with the currently proposed project. No major revisions would be required to the Final MND/IS as a result of the modifications. No new or more severe significant environmental impacts have been identified and preparation of an EIR or MND is not needed for the proposed project. The Town of Apple Valley has reviewed the prior Final MND dated January 2011 and finds that the project as proposed will not have a significant effect on the environment with conditioned mitigation measures

identified in the MND. Therefore, the Town has determined that this Addendum and the prior Final MND provide the appropriate environmental documentation for the project in compliance with the requirements and guidelines of CEQA.

Pursuant to the provisions of California Public Resources Code §21082.1, the Town of Apple Valley has reviewed and analyzed the information contained in the Addendum and the Final MND prepared pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The complete Addendum and Final MND including discussions, environmental analysis, conclusions, and proposed mitigation measures reflects the independent judgment of the Town of Apple Valley as to those issues at the time of publication.

The Addendum and Final MND will be maintained in the administrative record files at the Town of Apple Valley Town Hall offices.