



# State Route

## STATE ROUTE 239 PROJECT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### GENERAL / BACKGROUND

- 1. What is the purpose of the new State Route 239 roadway? Why is the project needed?**

*The project will provide a new four-lane highway from State Route 4 near Marsh Creek Road in Contra Costa County to Interstate 580 in Alameda County or Interstate 205 in San Joaquin County. This new state route will ultimately improve the transportation network for an area that has few viable north-south roadway connections in the nearly 17-mile stretch between eastern Contra Costa and San Joaquin counties. In addition, the project would support connections to emergency evacuation routes, reduce non-local traffic through the community of Byron, and enhance goods movement between eastern Contra Costa County and the Central Valley.*

- 2. When will the project be constructed? When will the new roadway open to the public? What is taking so long?**

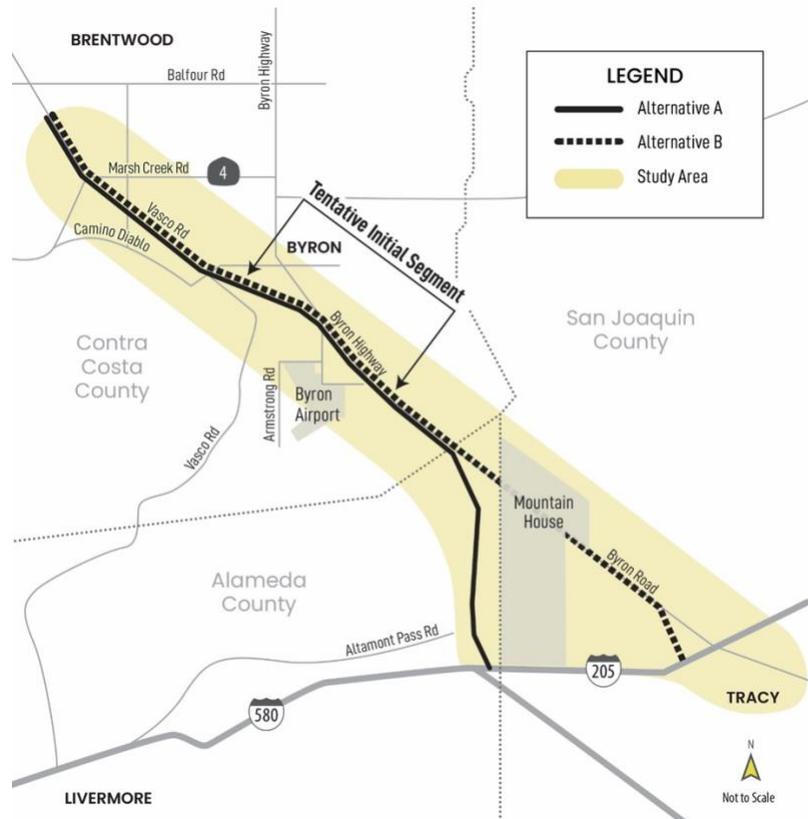
*The project is currently in the environmental clearance phase, which is anticipated to be completed in 2024. We are actively seeking additional funding, and when funding becomes available, design will begin on an initial, fundable segment of the corridor.*

*The full 17-mile project will require further environmental analysis and subsequent design, after funding is identified and secured. The funding to date has been slow to develop and thus the process has moved slowly. In addition, this project traverses three counties and many jurisdictions, and developing a project of this size requires substantial stakeholder input. Recent environmental laws have added another layer of complexity to this project.*

**3. What are the alternatives being considered? How will the new route be determined?**

*We have currently identified two build alternatives, shown in the figure below, that are being considered, along with a No Build project alternative. During this scoping process, we welcome ideas for additional alternatives that meet the project’s Purpose and Need. They may be carried forward for consideration and environmental study. The new route will be determined after an evaluation of the environmental impacts of all alternatives.*

*Figure: SR239 Project Alternatives*



**4. What are the roles of Caltrans and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority on this project?**

*Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Caltrans is the owner and operator of the State Highway System in California and retains responsibility for overseeing and approving the environmental document under CEQA and NEPA. Contra Costa Transportation Authority is the project sponsor. Ultimately, after the corridor is constructed, the route will be transferred to Caltrans who will own and operate SR 239.*

## TRAFFIC

### **5. How will construction affect traffic in my community?**

*Construction effects will depend on the alignment selected and proximity to existing roadways. There may be temporary delays and detours during construction, particularly when existing roads are being connected to the new roadway. Traffic-related impacts will be evaluated in detail in the environmental document.*

### **6. Will this project increase the amount of truck traffic in the area?**

*One of the project goals is to support inter-regional north-south goods movement operations. The project would provide a more direct connection for trucks traveling between eastern Contra Costa and San Joaquin counties and would allow trucks to avoid passing through the town of Byron.*

### **7. Is this project going to help reduce traffic through the town of Byron?**

*One of the project goals is to reduce non-local traffic through the town of Byron. This project would provide a more direct route between Byron Highway and Vasco Road/SR 4, bypassing the Byron community.*

## TRANSIT & ALTERNATIVE MODES

### **8. Why are CCTA and Caltrans building a new roadway? Have both agencies considered transit and other multi-modal alternatives? How will this project support alternative modes of travel like biking, walking, and public transit?**

*There is a need to provide a viable north-south connection between eastern Contra Costa and San Joaquin counties. The project will evaluate multi-modal opportunities along the corridor, including transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.*

### **9. Is the project team planning to include new transit options as part of this project?**

*The project will include feasible transit options as part of the project.*

**10. Is this project going to create bike lanes? / How are cyclist considerations being factored into the project plans? How will the project connect with existing rail and transit lines and complete streets?**

*The project will include construction of bike facilities with connections to transit stops and rail stations. The project will be designed to meet the Complete Streets policies of the surrounding jurisdictions. The public outreach effort includes bicycle advocacy groups.*

**11. Will there be new park-and-ride locations created near the freeway?**

*The project alternatives will be revised and refined based on the comments received during this current scoping process and possible transit park-and-ride will be considered.*

**ECONOMY**

**12. How will the project support increased economic growth in the region?**

*There is planned development in the region that would benefit from improved transportation facilities. The project would also improve connections between eastern Contra Costa County and western San Joaquin County, which is also expected to support economic growth.*

**13. How is this project going to support increases in jobs and planned growth that is anticipated in this region over the next 20 years?**

*There is planned development in the region that would benefit from improved transportation facilities.*

**14. How will the project affect emergency services in the area?**

*SR 4 is the only major evacuation route in eastern Contra Costa County. In the event of major catastrophe, which may have impacts to SR 4, evacuation routes in the area would be limited. A new connection to San Joaquin County would provide relief and an additional evacuation route.*

**15. Is building a new freeway expected to result in increased population growth in the area?**

*Development along most of the project alignment in Contra Costa County is constrained by urban limits and the county's no growth policy. Significant population increases along the alignment are not anticipated.*

**16. How are the costs and benefits of this project being weighed? How will the benefits of this project outweigh the costs?**

*As the project is developed and project funding is evaluated, further study will be conducted.*

## **EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT**

**17. How are the project partners ensuring meaningful public engagement and input? How are you involving local communities in this project?**

*The project team has coordinated with local jurisdictions and permitting agencies, as well as other major projects in the area. The project team has participated in many community meetings and had several discussions with agency stakeholders.*

**18. How does this project plan to protect tribal and cultural resources in the area?**

*During the environmental process, Caltrans and CCTA will reach out to Native American representatives for their input and concerns regarding cultural resources and tribal resources and will consult with Native American tribes as required by state and federal statutes.*

**19. How are you coordinating with other projects and construction in the area?**

*The project team has coordinated with sponsors of major projects within the project area and that effort will continue.*

## **ENVIRONMENT**

**20. What is the current status of the environmental review process? What is the project schedule?**

*Caltrans and CCTA circulated a Notice of Preparation under CEQA in December 2021. The federal scoping process will officially begin with issuance of a Notice of Intent at a date yet to be determined.*

*Issuance of the NOP begins the environmental review process and a combined Environmental Impact Report under CEQA and Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA is anticipated to be circulated for public review in 2023. A final EIR/EIS is anticipated in 2024.*

**21. How will this project impact the environment and wildlife in the area? Is the highway going to create a barrier to wildlife movement in the area? If so, how will the project accommodate or offset impacts to wildlife passage?**

*Technical studies have commenced to evaluate the impacts of the project on wildlife, habitat, and wildlife movement. Caltrans and CCTA will be coordinating with federal and state agencies concerning these evaluations. Prior project alternatives that would have bisected conservation lands were rejected. The two current build alternatives minimize impacts to conservation lands that lie west of the project area and minimize the fragmentation of core habitat areas. Caltrans and CCTA will evaluate opportunities to incorporate wildlife crossings – such as enlarged culverts – into the design of the new roadway.*

**22. How is this project going to impact birds that nest in and migrate through the project area? What steps are being taken to reduce impacts to these birds?**

*Technical studies have commenced to evaluate the impacts of the project on birds and other wildlife. The project may displace areas used for nesting by ground nesting and tree nesting birds. The project will likely require pre-construction surveys and frequent spot checks to ensure the project does not result in an impact to migratory birds and their nests.*

**23. What steps are being taken to protect conservation areas and agricultural lands in the area?**

*Earlier in the alternatives development process, several alternatives that would have adversely affected conservation lands were dismissed from further evaluation. The remaining two build would minimize encroachment onto existing conservation areas. Impacts to important farmland are also being considered in the environmental evaluation, and appropriate mitigation will be developed in coordination with project partners and private landowners.*

**24. What are the visual impacts of the proposed project? Will the project team consider impacts from increases in artificial night lighting?**

*The project will introduce a new highway in certain areas where no roadways exist and may expand existing roadways. This will result in a change to visual aesthetics in open space, agricultural and developed areas when compared to existing conditions. Visual aesthetics and lighting impacts will be evaluated during the environmental process. New lighting will be limited to key areas, such as interchanges and pedestrian crosswalks.*

**25. How will this project increase or decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions? How is the project planning on mitigating increases in GHG?**

*The project will result in greenhouse gas emissions during construction. The project's operational effect on greenhouse gas emissions will depend on whether the project will increase vehicle miles travelled (VMT) or not. If the project will increase greenhouse gas emissions and they are determined to be significant, then Caltrans and CCTA will examine feasible mitigation to reduce regional VMT.*

**26. How will this project affect air quality in the area?**

*The project will result in the release of criteria pollutants and other emissions during construction. The project may also increase air pollutant emissions during operation of the new facility, depending on whether the project will increase VMT or not.*

**27. How is this project going to affect vehicle miles traveled (VMT)?**

*The project's effect on VMT will be evaluated and disclosed as part of the environmental process.*

**PROPERTY**

**28. How will this project affect my property? / How will this project affect property owners in the area?**

*It is too early to determine project-related impacts on specific parcels since the final alignment has not been studied or selected. Once the potential impacts are known, they will be fully disclosed as part of the environmental process.*

**29. How will this project affect agricultural resources in the area?**

*It is too early to determine or quantify project-specific impacts on agricultural resources. Once the potential impacts are known, they will be fully disclosed as part of the environmental process.*

**FUNDING**

**30. How much will this project cost? Where is the funding coming from?**

*The project has federal and County funding to complete the environmental review process. The initial phase of the project, which is proposed to be the new roadway between Vasco Road and Byron Highway near Byron Airport, has Regional Measure 3 funding and additional funding is being sought. The project costs are being developed.*

**OTHER**

**31. Will this project improve access to the Byron Airport? Is traffic near the airport expected to increase?**

*The project will improve the connection to the Byron Airport. The County is updating the land use plan around the Airport and an environmental document is currently being finalized. Additional information on anticipated traffic is given in the Airport area planning document.*