



Board Agenda Item 8

DATE: September 24, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: Letter of Intent supporting Scenic Highway Designation for eastern segments of State Route 180 from Trimmer Springs Road to the Alta Main Canal (Post Mile 74.9 to 78.6)

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize the Chairman to sign and send a Letter of Intent to the State of California Department of Transportation, supporting the proposed Officially Designated Scenic Highway status of the eastern segment of State Route 180 from Trimmer Springs Road to the Alta Main Canal (Post Mile 74.9 to 78.6)

Consistent with the Fresno County General Plan, the Sierra Gateway Trust has been working with County staff and State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to pursue designation of an eastern segment of State Route (SR) 180 (3.7 miles) as an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway. In order to continue with the designation process, Caltrans is requesting a Letter of Intent from the County expressing its support of the proposed designation.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

The Board of Supervisors may elect to not take a position and reject the recommended issuance of the proposed Letter of Intent.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County cost associated with the recommended action.

DISCUSSION:

Since 1976, the Fresno County General Plan has designated the subject portion of SR 180 listed in the Recommended Action as a Scenic Highway. This designation was carried forward with the adoption of the 2024 General Plan Update. Also included in the 2024 General Plan Update is a policy and implementation program, which supports the proposed designation effort as follows:

Policy OS-L.9: The County shall work with the Department of Transportation to pursue scenic highway designation from the State of California for the State highway segments eligible for such designation (including those listed in the Scenic Roadways list below and any other segments added).

Program OS-L.A: The County shall work with Caltrans to apply for scenic highway designation for the

State highway segments eligible for such designation, and take necessary steps for approval, including adoption of scenic corridor protection programs for eligible segments.

The Sierra Gateway Trust, Inc., was founded in 2006, through a community effort to protect and promote Fresno County's Gateway to Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. Caltrans Office of Landscape Architecture manages the State Scenic Highway Program, provides guidance, and assists local government agencies, community organizations, and citizens with the process to officially designate scenic highways.

The Sierra Gateway Trust, Inc., with Department staff's input, has been working with Caltrans District 6 office of Landscape Architecture to obtain the Officially Designated Scenic Highway status for the eastern segment of SR 180 from Trimmer Springs Road to the Alta Canal. This eastern segment of SR 180 was removed by Caltrans from the previously approved Official Designation Request in 2015 due to the planned construction project to re-align SR 180 from post mile 74.1 to 78.6. The planned construction and realignment project has since been completed and the subject segment is eligible to obtain the Official Scenic Highway Designation.

Once a state route is in the Streets and Highways Code Section 263, it may be nominated for official designation by the local governing body with jurisdiction over the lands adjacent to the proposed scenic highway. The proposal must include a Letter of Intent from the local governing body and a narrative description of the scenic elements in the corridor that includes a discussion of any visual intrusions on scenic views including topographic and zoning maps.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT:

The Visual Assessment documents and describes segments of SR 180 designated as a State Official Scenic Highway. The Visual Assessment was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 10, 2015, by Resolution No. 15-030. Staff notes that an addendum to the currently adopted Visual Assessment for the subject section of eastern SR 180 may be necessary and staff may return with a separate agenda item based on direction from Caltrans.

CORRIDOR PROTECTION PROGRAM:

As required by Caltrans Scenic Highway Guidelines for the Scenic Highway designation, and in the Streets and Highway Code, a Corridor Protection Program must address the following five elements:

1. Regulation of land use (residential building intensity and allowable land uses); and
2. Site planning (review authority for proposed developments); and
3. Prohibition of off-site outdoor advertising structures, and control of on-site advertising structures; and
4. Control of earthmoving and landscaping (grading ordinances and landscaping requirements); and
5. Design and appearance of structures and equipment (utility structures, etc.)

The Corridor Protection Program was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 10, 2015, by Resolution No. 15-030.

PUBLIC NOTICING:

Notification of today's meeting was Published in the Fresno Business Journal, which is a newspaper of general circulation, and individual notices were mailed to 36 property owners located within 200 feet of both sides of the SR 180 segment proposed to be designated, and to interested individuals.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

A copy of the Agenda Item was provided to the Sierra Gateway Trust, Inc., and Caltrans District 6 Landscape Architecture Branch.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

February 10, 2015, Agenda Item No. 14
Resolution 15-030

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Attachments A - C
On file with Clerk - Letter of Intent
SR 180 Visual Assessment
SR 180 Corridor Protection Program

CAO ANALYST:

Salvador Espino