Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

for

SOTO STREET WIDENING FROM MULTNOMAH STREET TO NORTH MISSION ROAD

W.O. # E700070

City of Los Angeles

Bureau of Engineering
Bridge Improvement Group

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

INITIAL STUDY

(Article I – City CEQA Guidelines)

Council District: 14 Date: June 16, 2010

Lead City Agency: Bureau of Engineering – Bridge Improvement Program

Project Title: **SOTO STREET WIDENING FROM MULTNOMAH STREET TO NORTH MISSION ROAD**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of an Initial Study

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted in 1970 for the purpose of providing decision makers and the public with information regarding the environmental effects of proposed projects, identifying ways that environmental damage can be avoided, and disclosing to the public why a project is approved even if it leads to environmental damage. The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering, Environmental Management Group, has determined that the proposed project is subject to CEQA and no exemptions apply. Therefore, the preparation of an initial study is required.

An initial study is a preliminary analysis conducted by the lead agency, in consultation with other agencies (responsible or trustee agencies, as applicable), to determine whether there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. If the initial study concludes that the project, even with mitigation, may have a significant effect on the environment, an environmental impact report must be prepared; otherwise the lead agency may adopt a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration.

B. Process

Once the adoption of a negative declaration (or mitigated negative declaration) has been proposed, a public comment period opens for a minimum of 20 days. The purpose of this comment period is to provide public agencies and the general public with an opportunity to review the initial study and comment on the adequacy of the analysis and the findings of the lead agency regarding potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. If a reviewer believes there is substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, the reviewer should (1) identify the specific effect, (2) explain why it is believed that the effect would occur, and (3) explain why it is believed that the effect would be

significant. Facts or expert opinion supported by facts should be provided as the basis of such comments.

After the close of the public review period, the Board of Public Works considers the negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration, together with any comments received during the public review process, and makes a recommendation to the City Council on whether or not to approve the project. One or more Council committees may then review the proposal and documents and make their own recommendation to the full City Council. The City Council is the decision-making body. It considers the negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration, together with any comments received during the public review process, in the final decision to approve or disapprove the project. During the project approval process, persons and/or agencies may address either the Board of Public Works or the City Council regarding the project.

Public notification of agenda items for the Board of Public Works, Council committees, and the City Council is posted 72 hours prior to the public meeting. The agenda can be obtained by visiting the Council and Public Services Division of the Office of the City Clerk at City Hall, 200 North Spring Street, Suite 395; calling (213) 978-1047, (213) 978-1048, or TDD/TTY (213) 978-1055; or accessing www.lacity.org/CLK/index.htm.

If the project is approved, the city will file a notice of determination with the County Clerk within 5 days of its decision to adopt the negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration. The notice of determination will be posted by the County Clerk within 24 hours of receipt. This begins a 30-day statute of limitations on legal challenges to the approval under CEQA. The ability to challenge the approval in court may be limited to those persons who objected to the approval of the project and issues that were presented to the lead agency by any person, either orally or in writing, during the public comment period.

As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Location

Soto Street, between Mission Road and Multnomah Street, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles (see **Figure 1,** Regional Map, and **Figure 2,** Vicinity Map).

B. Goal or Objective

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve and preserve Soto Street as a vital north-south regional transportation link. The proposed project would widen existing travel lanes; widen the sidewalk along the west side and a new median lane, and add bike lanes and shoulders to each side of the roadway.

The goal/objective above states that this project IS for the benefit of travel time aka-commuters. Yet the Soto/ Mission St Bridge which is directly and inseparably linked to the Soto St Widening is stated as NOT being for travel time purposes. Transportation also implies cargo trucks, something not brought up in either of the two Negative Impact Reports.

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

C. Description

Not sure what "numerous billboards" they are speaking of. There are none along the Ascot Hills section.

The proposed project would widen Soto Street by relocating the existing eastern edge of right-of-way (ROW) 45 feet to the east. This would require the acquisition of ROW that currently accommodates numerous billboards. The resulting widened ROW would be configured to include the following:

- Two (one in each direction) 10-foot interior traffic lanes;
- Two (one in each direction) 11-foot exterior lanes;
- Two (one in each direction) 5-foot shoulder lanes striped for bikeway use;
- One 4-foot median lane; and
- One 9-foot sidewalk extended adjacent to the western edge of Soto Street with new railings. No sidewalk is proposed to the eastern edge of the roadway.

The proposed project would require cutting as much as 45 feet of ROW into the hill that rises from the east side of Soto Street and the construction of a cantilever and tie-back soldier pile retaining wall. The proposed retaining wall would have a maximum length of approximately 2,300 feet and a maximum height of approximately 35 feet. Weep holes would be designed as part of the retaining wall to prevent the build-up of water pressure. Overhead power lines and poles, which currently extend along the east side of the roadway, would be relocated to east of the new edge of roadway. See **Attachment A** for the project plot plans and cross sections.

The analysis in this document assumes that, unless otherwise stated, the project would be designed, constructed and operated following all applicable laws, regulations, ordinances and formally adopted City standards (e.g., *Los Angeles Municipal Code* and Bureau of Engineering *Standard Plans*). Construction would follow the uniform practices established by the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association (*e.g., Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction* and the *Work Area Traffic Control Handbook*) as specifically adapted by the City of Los Angeles (*e.g.*, The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works *Additions and Amendments to the Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction* (a.k.a. "The Brown Book," formerly Standard Plan S-610)).

As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

The City Planning Department does not have any plans for bike lanes to be implemented along the Soto Street. We have attended scoping meeting for Northeast LA and Soto St is not one where a need for bike lanes was found. This means less roadway is needed and less of Ascot Hills would be sliced off. This must be verified before anything is done to the Soto Street Bridge. If there is no need for Soto St to widened so much, maybe the Bridge can still be used as is.

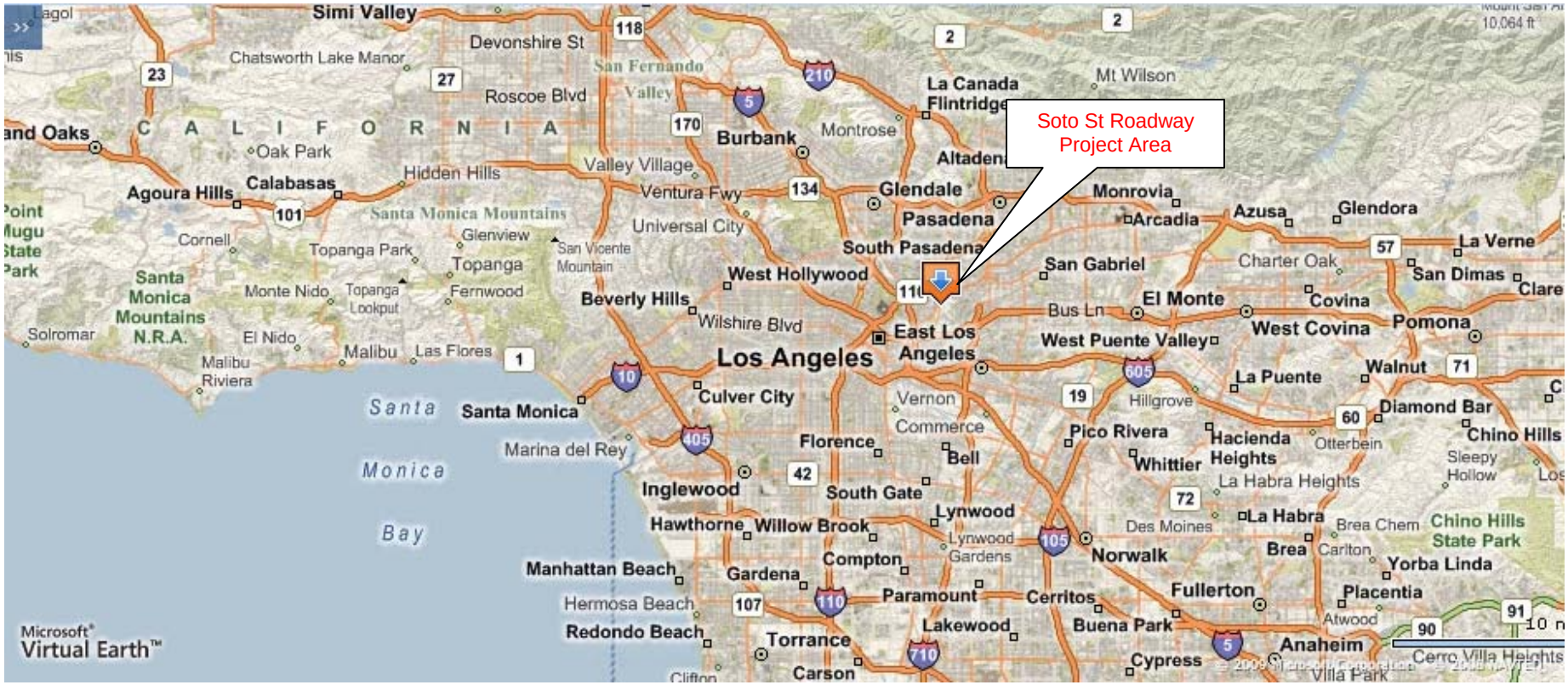
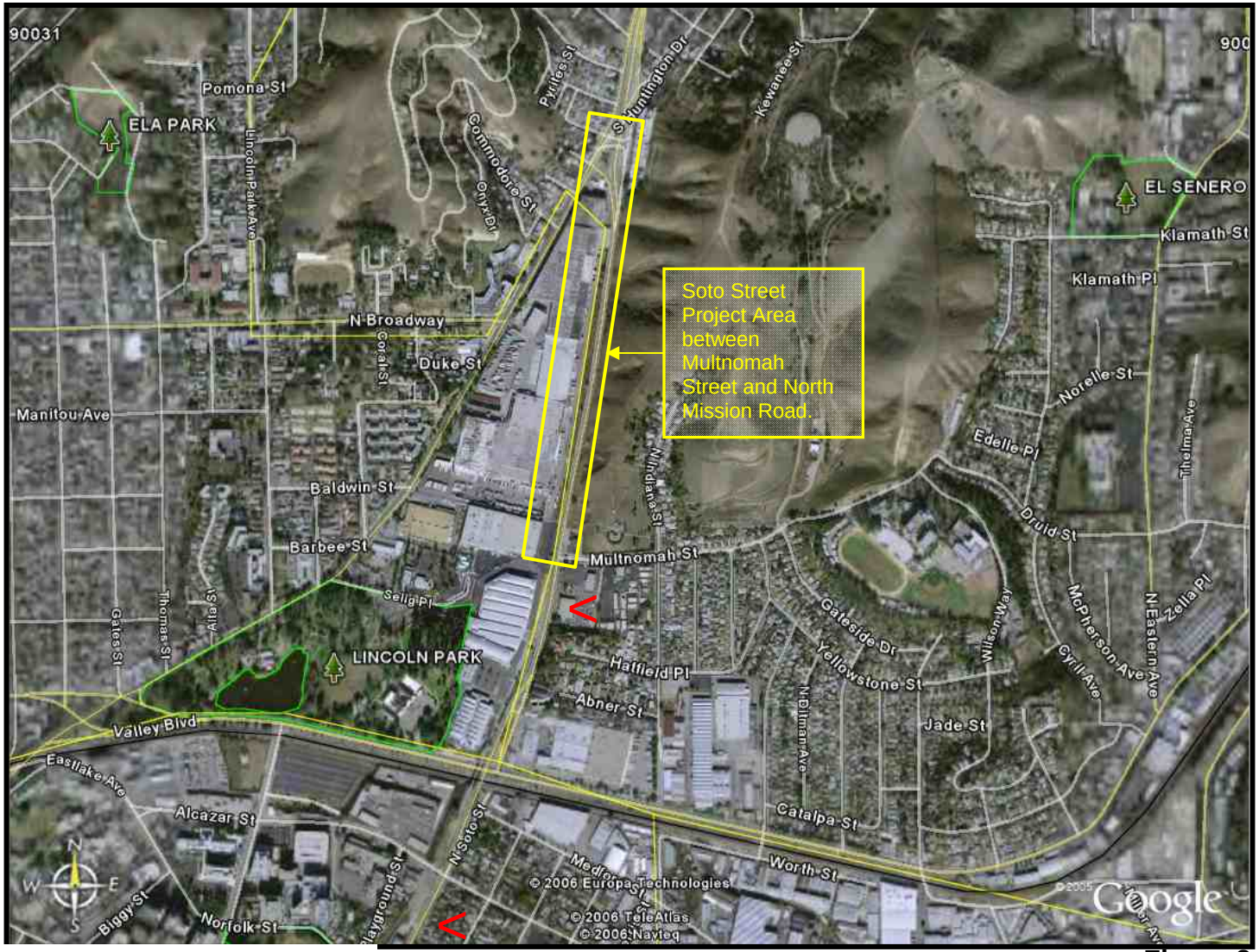


Figure 1
Regional Map

If this is the Soto St Widening Project, then there is another part missing because the Soto St will also be widened/modified from Multnomah to at least Lancaster Ave, directly across from Hazard Park. This third piece of the project puzzle would involve reinforcing and widening/ modifiying the Soto St Bridge over Valley Blvd. Yet we haven't heard anything concerning this third construction project.



Red arrows indicate approximate area of yet another project that will be tied to the Soto St Bridge and Soto St Widening Projects.

Map Not to Scale
Source: Google, 2006.

Figure 2
Vicinity Map

Note: The project plot plans are included as Attachment A in the Appendices.

III. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Again, incorrect community is stated.. While El Sereno is mentioned here, the other community needs to be Lincoln Heights, NOT Montecito Heights.

The proposed project study area connects the El Sereno and Montecito Heights neighborhoods within the Northeast Community Planning Area. The project site is located within a developed urban area that is zoned RE9-1, RE40-4, M1-1, PF-1, [Q]C2-1VL for residential, commercial, industrial, and public facility uses.[1] Single and multiple family residences are located to the north and northeast of the project area. Commercial, industrial, and public facilities are located on the west side of Soto Street.

A steep undeveloped hillside, largely comprised of open space, rises along the east side of Soto Street, between Multnomah Street and North Mission Road. Telephone lines are located along this side of the street. No storm drain facilities are located along this section of Soto Street. Right-of-way (ROW) belonging to the former Southern Pacific Railroad Company lies adjacent to the west side of Soto Street through the southern half of the project study area. The railroad track has been abandoned and some of the tracks have been removed. Between North Mission Road and Multnomah Street, there is one lane travelling south and two lanes travelling north. On the southbound approach to Multnomah Street, there is a left-turn pocket. A sidewalk is located on the west side of Soto Street in this section. There is no median in this section; a double yellow line divides the northbound and southbound lanes. The existing roadway has a total width of 46 feet. Presently, there are only street lights and occasional street trees on the west side of Soto Street.

Isn't Ascot Hills Developed Open Land that has been set aside? Yet this project is considering chopping up to 45 horizontal feet, which also means up to 35+ vertical feet, for almost 1 mile along Soto St. This is not what is being stated here in this study.

[1] City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. Zoning Information & Map Access System website: http://zimas.lacity.org/. Accessed March 3, 2008.

Photo 1: Facing south towards the intersection of Soto Street and Multnomah Street. Photo was taken from the east side of the roadway from a location north of Soto Street/ Multnomah Street. The Los Angeles Unified School District 5 building is shown on the right side of photo.

Photo 2: Facing south from a location north of the intersection of Soto Street and Multnomah Street on the west side of the roadway. The left portion of the photo shows the narrowing of the roadway north of this intersection.

Although the caption states to nore the single southbound lane and 2 northbound lanes, the fact is that there use to be TWO southbound lanes as well as two northbound lanes; until the City decided to take one lane away for unknown reason(s).

Photo 3: Facing north on Soto Street from a location north of the intersection of Soto and Multnomah Streets, looking from the west side of the roadway. Note the single southbound lane and the two northbound lanes. The hillside east of Soto Street is proposed to be used for roadway widening. Relocation of the overhead electrical wires may be required.

Photo 4: Facing north on Soto Street as it transitions to Mission Road. This photo was taken from the west side of the roadway from a location south of Soto Street/ Mission Road.

Photo 5: Facing south on Soto Street between Mission Road and Multnomah Street. Photo was taken from the west side of the roadway. Note the rail cars west of the roadway on the right side of this photo.

Photo 6: Facing south on Soto Street at a location south of Multnomah Street from the west side of the roadway. Note the narrowing of the roadway on the east side as the topography changes from level to steep hillside as shown on the left side of the photo.

IV.

Despite what is being implied about flow of traffic or narrow roadways, the truth is that there is never any delays or bumper to bumper congestion at any point along the route detailed above. The only wait a commuter deals with has to do with the traffic light signals and that is nothing extraordinary nor is there a safety concern. The use of only one northbound lane for traffic and the other for a bicycle lane is not hard to do and it would not .

distrupt traffic in a major way. Though there may be a little slow down on northbound Soto as two lanes merge into one vehicle lane, the flow would quickly pick up as the rest of Soto St past the Soto/Mission St Bridge & into Huntington Drive is without any signals or stop signs.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EVALUATION

The analysis in this document assumes that, unless otherwise stated, the project will be designed, constructed and operated following all applicable laws, regulations, ordinances and formally adopted City standards (*e.g.*, *Los Angeles Municipal Code* and Bureau of Engineering *Standard Plans*). Also, this analysis assumes that construction will follow the uniform practices established by the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association (*e.g.*, *Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction* and the *Work Area Traffic Control Handbook*) as specifically adapted by the City of Los Angeles (*e.g.,* The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works *Additions and Amendments to the Standard Specifications For Public Works Construction* (AKA "The Brown Book," formerly Standard Plan S-610)).

In the initial study checklist that follows, a brief explanation is provided for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately and clearly supported by the information sources cited after each question (*e.g.*, "The California Natural Diversity Database shows no sensitive species in the project area"). A "No Impact" answer is explained when it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (*e.g.*, "The project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis"). All sources so referenced are available for review at the office of the Bureau of Engineering, Bridge Improvement Program, 221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 350, Los Angeles, California (call Linda Moore at (213) 202-5575 to schedule an appointment).

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Linda Moore contact info
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Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

1. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds A.1, A.2;
Comment: The proposed project would widen and improve an existing roadway that extends through a fully developed neighborhood and is dominated by light industrial and vacant land uses. No scenic vistas would be impacted

Ascot Hills is considered by many to be a Scenic Vista.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds A.1, E.3; California Scenic Highway Mapping System
Comment: The project site is not located adjacent to or on a California State Scenic Highway as designated by the California Scenic Highway Mapping System.[2]

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds A.1, A.3;
Comment: The proposed project would widen and make improvements to an existing roadway. The proposed project would not construct buildings or other structures, except for a retaining wall at the foot of a steep hillside that would extend for approximately 2,300-feet and vary in height to a maximum of 34-feet. Although the proposed retaining wall would be a new component of the visual fabric of the area, substantial degradation would not occur.

Substantial degradation would occur when you factor in the huge retaining walls that will be put along Soto St after they cut 45 feet into Ascot Hills. The amount of graffiti that will go on these retaining walls will be another degrading factor, especially if the graffiti is not taken care of right away. The higher volume of vehicles will also be a factor in the degrading of the community.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold A.4;
Comment: Currently, street lights extend along the west side of Soto Street, through the proposed project area, but none are present on the east side of the street. The proposed project would widen Soto Street to the east and add street lights on the east side of Soto Street. While this is technically a new source of light, the roadway is already illuminated and the addition of street lights along the east side of the roadway would be in proportion to the widened roadway and conform to the City's surface foot-candle lighting requirements for a Major Class II Highway.

[2] California Department of Transportation, 2010. California Scenic Highway Mapping System webpage. Accessed at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm on March 25, 2010.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

2. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
Comment: The project site lies within an urbanized area of Los Angeles where Prime, Unique, or Farmland of State-wide importance does not exist.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Zoning Information & Map Access System
Comment: The project site is located within a developed urban area that is zoned RE9-1, RE40-4, M1-1, PF-1, [Q]C2-1VL for residential, commercial, industrial, and public facility uses.[3] The project site is not zoned for agricultural use nor is it located within the vicinity of agricultural uses.

c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
Comment: The proposed project would make no changes to the environment likely to promote the conversion of farmland. See response to Item 2a above.

[3] City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. Zoning Information & Map Access System website: http://zimas.lacity.org/. Accessed March 3, 2008.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

3. AIR QUALITY -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds B.1, B.2, B.3;

Comment: The proposed project would be constructed and operated in the South Coast Air Basin, currently a non-attainment area for ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and fine particulate matter (PM10). The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has adopted an Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), which sets forth strategies for attaining all national air quality standards by certain deadline dates and for meeting state standards at the earliest feasible date. The AQMP also serves as the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for bringing the air basin into attainment. The proposed project is listed in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and has been determined to be in conformity with the SIP. Consequently, the proposed project would not conflict with any air quality plans.

While the project itself may not be a big contributing factor to air quality/air pollution, the result of this project(s) will. More vehicles equal more noise, air, and environmental pollution.

Operation of the proposed project would not increase population or employment and would not exceed the forecasts identified in the RTIP. Therefore, the project is considered consistent with the AQMP and no impact would occur.

How can they be sure about this? What evidence do they have that supports this statement? How do we know that the open green space on either side of the Soto/Mission/Huntington Dr won't be developed to make housing closer to USC?

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds B.1, B.2, B.3; SCAQMD

Comment: The proposed project would be constructed in compliance with existing laws and regulations (including SCAQMD's construction emissions limitations). The proposed project would not be capacity enhancing nor result in significant volumetric traffic increases, or violations of air quality standards. Substantial contribution to existing or projected air quality violation are not expected.

See our response to 3a above.

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds B.1, B.2;

Comment: See response to 3b above

See our response to 3a above.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? Reference: Thresholds B.1, B.2, B.3; Comment: The proposed project would be constructed in an area wherein sensitive receptors (residences, schools, childcare centers, hospitals, parks or similar uses) are not immediately present. Construction of the proposed project would result in the short-term generation of air pollutant emissions. However, these emissions would not exceed SCAQMD significance thresholds and are not expected to significantly elevate existing ambient pollutant levels. Therefore, sensitive receptors would not be adversely affected by the proposed project.	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? Reference: Thresholds B.2; Comment: Construction activities would involve the use of a variety of gasoline and diesel powered equipment which emit exhaust gases and may involve the use of odiferous roadway sealants. However, any such odor releases would be intermittent, of short duration, and rapidly dissipated. The infrequency and short-term nature of odiferous releases is less than significant.	☐	☐	☒	☐
4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES – Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, 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? Reference: Threshold C; Comment: The project site is located within a developed and urbanized area of the City. Directly east and adjacent to the Project site is an undeveloped area known as Ascot Hills that contains disturbed annual grassland and remnant patches of disturbed Coastal Sage Scrub. Potential impacts that may occur within the existing right of way and substantial adverse effects on natural habitats and species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status would not arise from habitat modifications associated with the proposed Project. Additionally, federally listed threatened or endangered species are not known to exist within a 1-mile radius surrounding the Project Site[4].	☐	☐	☐	☒

See our response to 3a above.

[4] California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), September 1, 2006. RareFind 3: A Database Application for the Use of the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Base. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Fish and Game.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

b) Have a substantial adverse effect 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold C; Wetland Inventory; USGS Topo, Site Visit

Comment: The project site is located within a developed industrialized area of the City. Directly east and adjacent to the Project site is an undeveloped area known as Ascot Hills that contains disturbed upland vegetation (annual grassland and remnant patches of disturbed Coastal Sage Scrub). Based upon site visits and upon reviews of relevant biological resource databases; local and regional plans; and policies, regulations, and permit conditions of the California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, neither riparian habitat nor sensitive natural communities exist within the proposed Project site.

There are current projects underway in the Ascot Hills Park, such as the Riparian Corridor Restoration Project. This project will enable the continual restoration of natural habitat and the introduction of native plant species to the park.

The effect of this and the Soto St widening project must be re-evaluated to see if the projects will affect the reintroduction of native species.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold C; Wetlands Inventory, Site Visit

Comment: The Project does not contain, nor is it directly adjacent to marsh, vernal pool, or wetland habitat. Ascott Reservoir is located approximately ¼ mile east of the Project within Ascott Hills.

See answer above. Attachment of article of proposed reintroduction of ripirian species is included.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold C;

See answer above. Attachment of article of proposed reintroduction of ripirian species is included.

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The Project will affect portions of the undeveloped hillside east of Soto Street. The removal of herbaceous plants, woody shrubs, and trees is expected. If construction occurs during bird Spring/Summer nesting season (February 15 to August 31), direct (e.g. nest damage or removal) and indirect (e.g. noise) affects on nesting birds utilizing this area may occur. The California Fish and Game Code (Section 3503) protects the nest and eggs of native non-game birds. Also, the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 states that active, completed migratory bird nests or eggs cannot be disturbed during the bird nesting season. Potential impacts on breeding birds are considered significant under CEQA. To avoid impacts to migratory or nesting birds, a pre-construction survey should be conducted prior to construction activities to determine the presence or absence of active breeding migratory bird nests within or adjacent to the project site. A qualified biologist shall conduct the survey.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds C; General Plan Conservation Element

Comment: The Project may require the removal of one or more mature trees currently present to accommodate the roadway widening and power line relocation activities of the Project. Trees along the existing road include Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus* sp.), Mexican Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*). No tree protected by the City of Los Angeles is present within the Project impact areas (e.g. Oak Trees, Western Sycamores, Southern California Black Walnuts, or California Bays). In accordance with policy of the Board of Public Works, replacement trees would be provided by the Project in the quantity and location determined by the Bureau of Street Services.

See answer above. Attachment of article of proposed reintroduction of ripirian species is included.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold C; General Plan Conservation Element

Comment: The Project site is an existing roadway that is within an urban area of the City. The Project site does not lie within the boundaries of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

See answer above. Attachment of article of proposed reintroduction of ripirian species is included.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES – Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold D.3; L.A. Historical-Cultural Monument Inventory

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: There are no historical resources on or near the project site as listed in the California Register of Historic Places[5] or in the L.A. Historical-Cultural Monument Inventory[6].

The Bridge is considered a local historic landmark that has been part of the community since 1937. We would like to see it added to the National Register of Historic Places and/or the California Register of Historic Places.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 15064.5? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold D.2;
Comment: The project site is located within an existing fully developed area of the City that is not known to be a repository for archaeological resources. Most of the ground impacted by the proposed project has been previously disturbed for development of an existing street. The proposed project would extend that zone of disturbance several feet to the east and it is possible that archeological and or paleontological resources could be unearthed in previously undisturbed locations on either side of Soto Street during construction. Should such materials be encountered, they would be managed pursuant to the City's Standard Specifications, which require that construction be halted, in the vicinity of the find, and an on-site investigation be undertaken by a qualified professional to determine the appropriate management and disposition of such materials.

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds D.1, E.3;
Comment: See response to Item 5 b) above.

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold D.2;

[5] California Register of Historic Places website, http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21445, accessed March 5, 2008.
[6] Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument website: http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/HCM/HCM.CFM, accessed March 5, 2008.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would not occur in a location known to have historic use for the interment of human remains. However, earth-shaping activities required to widen Soto Street between Multnomah Street and Mission Road could unearth human remains. Should this occur, the Contractor would be required to conform to the provisions of Standard Specifications, which require that the County Coroner be contacted to manage the disposition of such remains.

6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS – Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map?[7] ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold E.1; Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

Comment: The proposed project is not located on a known earthquake fault, as delineated by the *Digital Images of Official Maps of Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones of California, Southern Region.* The street widening portion of the proposed project represents a minor expansion of an existing use and with essentially no change in risk associated with existing conditions. The retaining wall would be built to current standards to withstand impacts from the MCE (Maximum Credible Earthquake) event and its secondary effects. Therefore, while the proposed retaining wall conceivably could collapse and slightly enhance the possibility of bodily harm compared to the No Project alternative, this is considered to be a less than significant risk.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold E.1;

7 *Digital Images of Official Maps of Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones of California, Southern Region* (current as of March 1, 2000) produced by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would not involve construction of new buildings or increase risk of population exposure to injury as a result of strong seismic ground shaking beyond the existing situation

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold E.1;
Comment: The proposed project would be constructed in an area deemed to have low potential for ground failure due to liquefaction.

This statement contradicts the one made for the Soto St Bridge. It's significant because the projects are pretty much in the same area, right next to each other. How can there be two different answers to a question that deals with the same soil?

iv) Landslides? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold E.1;
Comment: The proposed project would involve cutting into a steep hillside on the east side of Soto Street to widen the existing roadway. Such a cut would increase the potential for landslide beyond the present situation; however, an engineered retaining wall would be erected along the length of the hillside cut and it is expected that this structure would prevent landslides from impacting the project site.

The potential for landslides to occur are higher even with the reatining wall because of amount of disturbed soil/area along the Ascot Hills.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold E.2
Comment: The proposed project would require grading and paving to the side of the existing roadway. These activities would be accomplished using Best Construction Management Practices to prevent soil erosion and/or the loss of topsoil.

Again, the projects (Soto St Bridge, Soto St Widening and USC's Master Plan) need to be reviewed together in order to get an accurate picture of the impact these projects will have on the environment.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐
Reference: Threshold E.1;

See our response to 6b above.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would not be located in an Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone, Fault Rupture Study Area,[8] area susceptible to liquefaction,,[9] or area susceptible to landslides.[10] However, according to the City of Los Angeles General Plan, Safety Element, landslides can be triggered by the undercutting of slopes during construction.[11] The City Grading Code, requires that professional geologists supervise hillside grading and a retaining wall would be included in the design of the proposed project to prevent such an occurrence

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Uniform Building Code
Comment: The proposed project would not be constructed in an area of expansive soils

See our response to 6b above.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold E.3;
Comment: The proposed project does not include new buildings or other new facilities that would require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds F.1, F.2;

[8] City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. *General Plan, Safety Element, Exhibit A – Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zones & Fault Rupture Study Areas In the City of Los Angeles.* Adopted by City Council November 26, 1996. Page 47.
[9] Ibid. *Exhibit B – Areas Susceptible to Liquefaction In the City of Los Angeles*. Page 49.
[10] Ibid. *Exhibit C –Landslide Inventory & Hillside Areas In the City of Los Angeles*. Page 51.
[11] City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. General Plan, Safety Element. Adopted by City Council November 26, 1996. Page II-18.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would involve the transportation, use, and disposal of limited quantities of hazardous materials such as petroleum fuels, lubricants, paint and tar. Construction materials would be used for a short period of time and would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment as these materials would be properly stored when not in use and would be disposed of according to applicable requirements. The proposed project would include pavement markings that would contain a small amount of lead, but pavement markings exist on all paved roadways and do not pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment. According to Ridwan Hardy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the existing utility poles do not have mounted transformers, and hence, would not be considered a significant hazard if they are removed or relocated. Therefore, project impacts from hazardous materials would be less than significant.

Again, the projects (Soto St Bridge, Soto St Widening and USC's Master Plan) need to be reviewed together in order to get an accurate picture of the over-all impact these projects will have on the environment.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?
Reference: Thresholds F.1, F.2;

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

The projects (Soto St Bridge, Soto St Widening and USC's Master Plan) need to be reviewed together in order to get an accurate picture of the over-all impact these projects will have on the environment.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: Operation of the proposed project would not involve hazardous materials. As with any project, construction of the proposed project would involve the transportation, use, and disposal of limited quantities of hazardous materials such as paint and tar. Construction materials would be used for a short period of time and would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment as these materials would be properly stored when not in use and would be disposed of according to applicable requirements. The proposed project includes improvements to an existing roadway that would not use hazardous materials as part of long-term operations. According to the Initial Site Assessment (ISA) prepared for the proposed project, no hazards or potential hazardous waste areas were identified within or adjacent to the proposed alignment. Therefore, project impact from reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the likely release of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold F.2;

Comment: Operation of the proposed project would not involve hazardous materials. As with any project, construction of the proposed project would involve the transportation, use, and disposal of limited quantities of hazardous materials such as paint and tar. The project site is not within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Therefore, the proposed project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

See our response to 7b above.
***
****This is also INCORRECT since Multnomah Elementary is located at the Intersection of Soto St and Multnomah Ave. which is where the project is suppose to be starting from. It is a FEW HUNDRED FEET from a known school site.*******

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold F.2; ISA

Comment: According to the Initial Site Assessment (ISA) prepared for the proposed project, no hazards or potential hazardous waste areas were identified within or adjacent to the proposed alignment. Therefore, no project impact would result.

See our response to 7b above.

e) For a project located within 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 result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Reference: Threshold F.1, K.2;
Comment: The project site is not located within an airport land use plan.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold F.1, K.2;
Comment: N/A. Please see response to Item 7 e above.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold F.1, K.2;
Comment: The proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The Contractor would be required to maintain one travel lane in each direction open at all times and to submit for approval by DOT a work Area Traffic Control Plan, which includes provisions for alerting Emergency Service providers in advance of any road closures, detours or significant reduction in capacity.

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold K.2;
Comment: The project site is not located in a designated Wildfire Hazard Area (see *Exhibit D – Selected Wildfire Hazard Areas In the City of Los Angeles*.[12]) The project does not involve the construction of structures where people would reside, recreate, or work; therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to the risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

Ascot Hills are used for recreation and thus the potential for wildfire danger is very high.

8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

[12] City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. General Plan, Safety Element. Adopted by City Council November 26, 1996. Page 53.

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Reference: Threshold G.2;
Comment: Because the proposed project would widen an existing roadway and would not construct buildings or increase population, operation of the proposed project would not create a new source of wastewater requiring treatment. The proposed project would involve an area less than 1-acre (approximately 41,000 S.F.) and therefore qualifies for exemption from the requirement to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The project would be constructed under the City's General Stormwater Pollution Prevention Permit, which requires the implementation of Best Construction Management Practices pertaining to the prevention of soil erosion and introduction of hazardous materials to the stormwater management system Compliance with these standards would result in a less than significant impact.

****
***So the statement here is that less than ONE ACRE of land is going to be affected? That includes all the area on both sides of Soto St and the 45 feet by 35 feet of Ascot Hillside that is proposed as being sliced off?
.
These numbers need to be rechecked because it doesn't seem plausible that less than an acre of land is going to be disturbed and/or hauled away. SEE MAP OF AREA AND PICS PROVIDED.

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds G.2, G.3;
Comment: The proposed project would place impervious materials over existing uncovered ground areas and thus, marginally reduce the capacity for percolation of rain to underlying aquifers. However, the proposed project is not located in an area of significant groundwater recharge and its overall effect on the nearest aquifer would be less than significant and would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level during construction.

They may have a detrimental affect on the Ascot Hills Riparian Restoration Projects that are planned in the near future. There is also the Hazard Park Wetland Restoration Project. The effects of this project concerning these two proposed projects has not been studied. The alteration of Ascot Hills and the diversion of rain water/percolation might have a very negative effect on these two restoration projects. This is again the reason that these projects need to be looked at together and with more research. It's essential in order to ensure the success and to safe-guard the destruction of the two mentioned restoration projects.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through 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?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds G.1, G.2; USGS Topo
Comment: The proposed project would have no effect on the existing drainage pattern of the area. Best Construction Practices would be employed to minimize the off-site transport of soils via the stormwater conveyance system, which discharges to the Los Angeles River, approximately 1.68 miles west of the project site.

The large retaining walls and the disturbance of soil might have a significant affect on the amount of erosion or siltation.

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would

See our response to 8c. We also need
.
☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

to remember that by not presenting these projects as one, the natural wetlands habitat found in Hazard Park is not being considered as a factor here. But that natural wetland might be dependant of rain water that percolates

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

result in flooding on- or off-site?
Reference: Threshold G.1; USGS Topo;
Comment: The proposed project would neither alter the existing drainage pattern of the area nor alter the course of a stream or river.

. underground and resurfaces at Hazard Park. Again, these projects are being presented piecemeal and all the underlying factors are not being considered. It's a very disingenuous way of presenting these projects separately to avoid the need to discuss these issues.

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Threshold G.1;
Comment: The proposed project would widen an existing roadway and thereby marginally increase the area of impermeable surfaces contributing to the local stormwater drainage system. However, the amount of increase would be minor and within the capacity of the existing stormwater management system to accommodate with existing facilities. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Threshold G.3;
Comment: The proposed project would have no additional impacts to water quality beyond those discussed in the preceding sections.

Again, the ground-water that feeds Hazard Park's natural wetlands is being avoided here.

g) 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Thresholds G.1, G.2, G.3, G.4; FIRM
Comment: The proposed project would not involve the construction of new housing or any other action that would result in the placement of housing within a federally mapped 100-year flood hazard area. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Threshold G.4; FIRM
Comment: See response to Item 8 e) above..

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Thresholds G.1, G.3; FIRM
Comment: The proposed project does not lie within an area prone to flooding by either levee or dam failure.

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐
Reference: Thresholds E.1, G.3; Google Earth

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would be located in an area approximately 15 miles away from the Pacific Ocean at an elevation of approximately 390-feet where the threat of damage from Tsunami is remote.

Ascot Reservoir, situated approximately one-quarter mile northeast of the Soto Street and Mission Road merge at an elevation of approximately 625-feet, is the nearest body of surface water to the project corridor and does present the risk of overtopping as a result of seismic-induced seiche activity. However, this is an existing condition that is independent of the proposed project. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

The proposed project would involve sculpturing and exposure of bare soils on a large hill situated adjacent to the proposed project's roadway. This area could be temporarily susceptible to mudflow under intense rainfall conditions during construction. This potentiality would be avoided by scheduling land-shaping activities for dry-weather periods of the year. The proposed project includes placement of a permanent retaining wall designed to withstand potential mudflow events resulting from saturated hillside soils.

9. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold H.2;
Comment: The proposed project includes physical improvements to an existing roadway and would not physically divide an established community. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Reference: Thresholds H.1, H.2; General Plan
Comment: Soto Street is classified as a Major Highway Class II by the Generalized Circulation map for Northeast Los Angeles.[13] The proposed project would require right-of-way to the east of the existing roadway, which is currently zoned for Open Space (OS) and Public (P) use. No zoning change would be required and the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds H.1, H.2; General Plan
Comment: The project site would be located on and adjacent to an existing heavily-travelled urban roadway surrounded by industrial, residential, and commercial uses. The project site does not contain any area set aside for habitat or natural community conservation. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

All projects need to be evaluated together to get a more complete & better picture.

10. MINERAL RESOURCES – Would the project:

a) 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold E.4;
Comment: The proposed project would not occur in an area where mineral extraction activities currently exist. The proposed project would widen an existing roadway and not interfere with mineral extraction activities should they be proposed for the future.

b) 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold E.4;
Comment: Please see response to Item 10 a) above.

11. NOISE – Would the project result in:

a) 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds I.1, I.2, I.3, I.4;

All projects need to be evaluated together to get a more complete & better picture.

[13] Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan.

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would be constructed under the guidance of Standard Specifications, which incorporates (in part) *Chapter IV, Article 1, Section 41.40* of the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). This Ordinance (*Section 41.40(a)*) prohibits any construction activity that generates substantial noise levels between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. *Section 41.40(c)* restricts construction on Saturdays and national holidays to between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and prohibits construction on Sundays for all construction within 500 feet of residences.

The end result of all these projects would increase the noise level for the surrounding area and its residents.

Construction of the proposed project would generate intermittent high noise levels on and adjacent to the site. However, sensitive land uses would not be located within close proximity of the project site. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated..

The proposed project would slightly realign a portion of Mission Road to the east; however the adjacent land uses are either open space or vacant and sensitive receptors would not be impacted.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds I.1, I.2, I.3, I.4;

Comment: Vibration is sound radiated through the ground. The proposed project could involve the placement of driven piles, as part of the proposed retaining wall, and some vibration is likely to occur. However, vibration effects are unlikely to extend to either residential or otherwise occupied structures beyond the immediate construction zone.

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds I.2, I.3, I.4;
Comment: Please see response to Item 11 a) presented previously.

The end result of all these projects would increase the noise level for the surrounding area and its residents.

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds I.1, I.2, I.3, I.4;

The end result of all these projects would increase the noise level for the surrounding area and its residents.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: Construction of the proposed project would generate short-term intermittent increases in noise associated with construction activities. However, as discussed in item (a) above, the impact would be considered less than significant. Thus, the temporary increase in noise levels would not be considered excessive, detrimental to the public health, welfare and safety, or contrary to public interest.

The effects the projects will have on the community and it's environment after the projects are completed is not being considered. Residents will be subjected to higher traffic volume which will add noise, air, and environmental pollution. This will drastically change the Quality of Life that the majority of residents are use to.

e) For a project located within 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds I.1, I.2, I.4;
Comment: The project is not located within an area identified as being within an airport land use plan. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

f) 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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds I.1, I.2, I.4;
Comment: The proposed project is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

12. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- Would the project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold J.1;
Comment: The proposed project would improve the safety on Soto Street, Multnomah Street and Mission Road by widening lanes and other roadway improvements such as the addition of street lights. The proposed project would not construct new residences or other buildings, or otherwise directly or indirectly induce population growth. Therefore, no project impact would result.

.
The effects the projects will have on the community and it's environment after the projects are completed is not being considered. Residents will be subjected to higher traffic volume which will add noise, air, and environmental pollution. This will drastically change the Quality of Life that the majority of residents are use to.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds J.1, J.2;
Comment: The proposed project would make improvements to an existing roadway and would not displace any housing. Therefore, no project impact on housing would result.

See our response to12a above.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds J.2;

See our response to12a above.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Comment: The proposed project would make improvements to an existing roadway and would not displace any people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

13. PUBLIC SERVICES --

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

i) Fire protection? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold K.2;
Comment: The proposed project would widen Soto Street in order to improve public safety and to improve the efficiency of traffic movements along Multnomah Street, Mission Road, and Soto Street. The proposed project would not construct new residences or other buildings, or otherwise directly or indirectly induce population growth. Police, Fire, and other Emergency vehicles would continue to have priority during emergencies as to not impact response times. Thus, the proposed project would not increase the need for public services nor increase the use of existing public services. Therefore, no adverse impact on public services would occur.

These questions are unknown due to the fact that the study is over ten years old. An updated study is needed.

ii) Police protection? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold K.1;
Comment: Same as Comment 13.(a).(i)

iii) Schools? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold K.3;
Comment: Same as Comment 13.(a).(i)

iv) Parks? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold K.4;
Comment: Same as Comment 13.(a).(i)

v) Other public facilities? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold K.5;
Comment: Same as Comment 13.(a).(i)

14. RECREATION --

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

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? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Threshold K.4;

Comment: The proposed project would not induce population growth; therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

These questions are unknown due to the fact that the study is over ten years old. An updated study is needed.

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒
Reference: Threshold K.4;
Comment: The proposed project would not include recreational facilities. Please also see response to 14 a) above.

These questions are unknown due to the fact that the study is over ten years old. An updated study is needed.

15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- Would the project:

a) 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)? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds L.1, L.2, L.3, L.4, L.8;
Comment: The proposed project would widen Soto Street in order to improve public safety and to improve the efficiency of traffic movements along Multnomah Street, Mission Road, and Soto Street. Notwithstanding, the project would not be capacity-enhancing and is not expected to result in a substantial increase of vehicle trips or to appreciably change existing roadway V/C ratios or intersection congestions. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

Study is over a decade old and if new lanes are proposed to be added it is because they are directly tied to the amount of traffic projected. Of course it will increase the volume of cars because that is what the project is all about; making the commute to Downtown or USC's Health School shorter/faster for all the commuters.

The proposed project is a trip generator, especially when it's tied to the Soto St/ Mission Rd Bridge and the Soto St Bridge Over Valley Blvd Widening, which is asking for more lanes for traffic to use.

b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐
Reference: Thresholds L.1, L.2, L.3;
Comment: The proposed project would improve vehicle safety for opposing traffic on Soto Street with the widening of the roadway and the addition of a 4-foot median lane, and enhance alternative modes of transportation by widening the existing sidewalk for pedestrians on the west side of Soto Street and adding bicycle lanes in both directions. The proposed project would improve and add to existing facilities and support the existing levels of traffic, but would not be capacity-enhancing. Therefore, project-related impacts to level of service standards are not anticipated.

If not capacity enhanceing , why the need for more lanes and why does the bridge going to be knocked down? Can't the proposed changes be done without the need to destroy the bridge or slice off part of Ascot Hills? It's precisely because it is a capacity-enhancing project that these proposed projects are being done the way they are; piecemeal and misinforming.

c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

ALL COMMENTS IN RED FONT ARE FROM THE EL SERENO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Reference: Thresholds N/A
Comment: The proposed project would improve traffic safety and enhance alternative modes of transportation. See discussion 15 b) above. The proposed project would not construct new residences or other buildings, and would not increase air traffic levels or make a change in location that results in substantial safety risks. Therefore, no impact on air traffic patterns would result.

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds N/A
Comment: The proposed project would conform to the engineering requirements of the City; hazardous design features would not result.

e) Result in inadequate emergency access? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold L.5;
Comment: The proposed project would maintain access to adjacent properties and would not permanently impact access or movement of emergency service providers. During construction, the Contractor would be required to comply with Standard Specifications, which require maintenance of at least one lane of traffic in each direction at all times and 24-hour notification of area emergency service providers prior to the commencement of construction activities.

f) Result in inadequate parking capacity? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold L.7;
Comment: No parking impacts would occur with the implementation of the proposed project. As land use changes would not occur, there would not be an increased demand for parking. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in inadequate parking capacity.

Total impact of all projects is unknown; projects are being presented piecemeal. More studies need to be conducted due to the studies being used here are over ten years old.

g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

Reference: Threshold L.6;

Comment: A bus stop is located on the northbound side of Soto Street to the south of Multnomah Street. Another bus stop is located on Multnomah Street before the intersection of Soto Street and Multnomah Street. Widening of Soto Street north of Multnomah Street would not impact these two bus stops during project construction, as all construction activity would occur north of Multnomah Street. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs supporting alternative transportation.

But it would impact Multnomah Elementary school that lies a few hundred feet away!!

16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS – Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold M.2;
Comment: The proposed project would not generate additional wastewater. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

Total impact of all projects is unknown; projects are being presented piecemeal. More studies need to be conducted due to the studies being used here are over ten years old.

b) 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 effects? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Thresholds G.1, M.1, M.2;
Comment: The proposed project would neither generate additional wastewater nor result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

c) 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? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Thresholds G.1, M.2;
Comment: The proposed project would slightly modify the existing stormwater drainage system to accommodate the incremental runoff increase associated with the proposed project's roadway widening. This activity is expected to be minor and significant impacts are not anticipated.

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold M.1;
Comment: The proposed project would make no demands on water entitlements or resources. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

commitments?
Reference: Threshold K.2;
Comment: As discussed in Sections a) and b), above, the proposed project would not generate additional quantities of wastewater. Therefore, project-related impacts are not anticipated.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Reference: Threshold K.3;
Comment: The proposed project would generate minor quantities of demolition debris and excess soil materials as part of the roadway widening activity. The demolition debris would be, for the most part, inert materials (concrete and paving materials) suitable for recycling and/or deposit in a Class III landfill. Excess soil resulting from landforming activities would be suitable for backfill elsewhere or for use as landfill daily cover. Therefore, adverse project-related impacts are not anticipated.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: Threshold M.3;
Comment: See response to Item 16 f) above.

17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE --

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference: All sections, particularly C, D.1, D.2, D.3
Comment: The proposed project would occur within an urban environment and would not impact wildlife habitat or significant biological resources. Based on the preceding analysis, the proposed project would not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Therefore, no adverse impacts to the above-referenced issues would result due to development of the proposed project.

YES for 17 a, b, & c; all the projects put together created a huge difference to the Quality of Life and Health risk for residents/stakeholders in this are and all along Huntington Drive.
Although the studies only project what they priict will happen within that small area the project is located in the fact is that these streets collect to N Huntington Drive and Monterey Road which are already major and heavily used streets.
.
These two major traffic arteries run down the middle of El Sereno and any changes up or down from these streets will affect all those residents who live in El Sereno. This is why these projects need to be revisited and updated. They violate the California Environmental Quality Act on many different levels.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With	Less Than Significant	No Impact

of probable future projects)?
Reference: All sections
Comment: The proposed project is in a developed area. Based on the preceding analysis, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce development activities that, in combination with the proposed project, have the potential to produce cumulatively significant environmental impacts. Therefore, no cumulatively considerable adverse impacts would result due to development of the proposed project and project impact would be less than significant.

See our response for17a above.
How is this conclusion verified? What studies have been done to corroborate this conclusion?!

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Reference:
Comment: The purpose of the Soto Street Widening Project is to improve Level of Service, as well as to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, on an existing roadway. Based on the preceding analysis, the proposed project would not have adverse environmental effects that would directly or indirectly affect human beings. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to human beings would result due to development of the proposed project.

See our response for17a above.

IV. MITIGATION MEASURES

Impacts to migratory or nesting birds will be determined based on project timing and absence/presence of suitable nesting habitat within close vicinity to the project site. A pre-construction survey shall be conducted prior to construction activities, particularly vegetation removal of plants, woody shrubs, and trees, to determine the presence or absence of active breeding migratory bird nests within or adjacent to the project site. A qualified biologist shall conduct the survey.

If an active nest is found, the bird shall be identified as to species and the approximate distance from the closest work site to the nest estimated. No additional measures need be implemented if active nests are more than the following distances from the nearest work site: (a) 500 feet for raptors; or (b) 250 feet for other non-special-status bird species.

If active nests are closer than those distances to the nearest work site, and a potential exists for destruction of a nest or substantial disturbance to nesting birds due to construction activities, nests shall be avoided by placing a 250 ft. (500 ft. for raptors) non-disturbance buffer around the nest tree. The buffer shall be fenced with orange construction fencing prior to initiation of grading or vegetation removal. The non-disturbance buffer zone shall remain in place until it has been determined by a qualified biologist that the young

have fledged and are flying well enough to avoid the project construction zone, typically by August 31st.

V. NAME OF PREPARERS

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VII. DETERMINATION - RECOMMENDED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

A. Summary

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve operation of Soto Street with standard lane width, sidewalk and bike lanes, and to preserve Soto Street as a viable north-south regional transportation link. The proposed roadway widening would consist of a 4-foot median, two 10-foot interior lanes, two 11-foot exterior lanes, 5-foot bikeways on each side, and an 9-foot sidewalk on the west side with new railings, for a total width of 65 feet. Widening would occur on the east side of the road. The proposed project would require the construction of a cantilever and tie-back soldier pile retaining wall to be built on the east side of Soto Street, cutting as much as 45 feet of ROW into the hillside. The proposed retaining wall would have a maximum length of 2,300 feet and a maximum height of 35 feet. In addition, the proposed project would require the relocation and upgrade of existing utility poles, and the addition of street lights, on the east side of Soto Street. Several billboards and ROW would need to be acquired in order to proceed with the proposed project. Mitigation measures would be implemented to protect or to avoid potential impacts on nesting birds. The proposed project would not have any other significant impacts, as explained in this Initial Study.

B. Recommended Environmental Document

On the basis of this initial study, I find that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and that a **Mitigated Negative Declaration** should be prepared.

Prepared By: _____
Kendall B. Jue, Project Manager
UltraSystems Environmental, Inc.

Approved By: _____
Linda Moore, Environmental Supervisor
Bridge Improvement Program

ATTACHMENTS:

- Project Plot Plans/Cross Sections
- URBEMIS 2007 Version 9.2.4 Report.
- Status Report (Existing Conditions Only), Draft Traffic Study for Soto Street and Bridge (53C-0011) Widening, City of Los Angeles. February 2007.

REFERENCES:

1. American National Standards Institute (ANSI). *Guide to the Evaluation of Human Exposure to Vibration in Buildings.* ANSI S.329-1983. 1983.

2. California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), September 1, 2006. RareFind 3: A Database Application for the Use of the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Base. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Fish and Game.

3. California Register of Historical Resources website: http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21445,

4. California Scenic Highway mapping system website: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/index.htm.

5. City of Los Angeles, Dept. of City Planning. *General Plan*. Including community plans and technical elements.

6. City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning. Zoning Information & Map Access System website: http://zimas.lacity.org/.

7. City of Los Angeles Municipal Code. Available at: http://www.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:lamc_ca.

8. Federal Transit Administration. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*. May, 2006.

9. FPL and Associates, Inc. *Status Report (Existing Conditions Only), Draft Traffic Study for Soto Street and Bridge (53C-0011) Widening*, *City of Los Angeles*. February 2007.

10. Google Earth. 2008.

11. Metropolitan Transportation Authority. *2004 Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County*.

12. National Register of Historic Places website: http://www.nr.nps.gov/nrloc1.htm.

13. SCAQMD. “Localized Significant Thresholds” (August 28, 2007) (http://www.aqmd.gov/CEQA/handbook/LST/LST.html).

14. State of California, Department of Conservation. *Important Farmland in California, 2004*.