



# PUBLIC NOTICE

## APPLICATION FOR STANDARD INDIVIDUAL PERMIT

*LOS ANGELES DISTRICT*

**Public Notice/Application No.:** SPL-2010-00944-SCH

**Project:** Interstate 215 Widening Project from Scott Road to Nuevo Road

**Comment Period:** March 12, 2012 through April 11, 2012

**Project Manager:** Sophia Huynh; 213-452-3357; Sophia.C.Huynh@usace.army.mil

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### Applicant

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### Contact

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### Location

The Interstate 215 (I-215) Widening Project is located along I-215 from Scott Road to Nuevo Road within the cities of Perris and Menifee, Riverside County, California (33.740757°N, -117.188759°W). Please refer to the attached Project Vicinity Map.

### Activity

The proposed project would result in permanent impacts to 0.019 acre of riverine wetland waters of the U.S. (WOUS), 0.671 acre of jurisdictional vernal pool, and 0.377 acre of non-wetland WOUS; and temporary impacts to 0.087 acre of riverine wetland WOUS, 0.244 acre of jurisdictional vernal pool, and 1.274 acres of non-wetland WOUS. Permanent impacts would result from permanent placement of bridge piers, structure foundation, and rock rip rap. Temporary impacts would result from construction access and staging. Such proposed activities are associated with the planned widening of approximately 12.5 miles of I-215 between Scott Road and Nuevo Road. Please refer to the attached drawings. For more information, see page 3 of this notice.

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Interested parties are hereby notified that an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawing(s). Interested parties are invited to provide their views on the proposed work, which will become a part of the

record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued or denied under section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1344). Comments should be mailed to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Division  
Attn: Sophia Huynh, CESPL-RG-T-SPL-2010-00944-SCH  
P.O. Box 532711, Los Angeles, California 90053

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: Sophia.C.Huynh@usace.army.mil

### **Evaluation Factors**

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, because the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material into WOUS, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Guidelines (40 CFR part 230) as required by section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

### **Preliminary Review of Selected Factors**

**EIS Determination**- A preliminary determination has been made that an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed work.

**Water Quality**- The applicant is required to obtain water quality certification under section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Section 401 requires that any applicant for an individual section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance. For any proposed activity on Tribal land that is subject to

section 404 jurisdiction, the applicant will be required to obtain water quality certification from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**Coastal Zone Management**- This project is located outside the coastal zone and preliminary review indicates that it would not affect coastal zone resources. A final determination of whether this project affects coastal zone resources will be made by the Corps, in consultation with the California Coastal Commission, after review of the comments received on this Public Notice.

**Cultural Resources**- On January 1, 2004, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and Caltrans entered into a Programmatic Agreement (PA) ([http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/vol1/sec3/cultural/ch28arch/files/Programmatic\\_Agreement\\_for\\_Section\\_106.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/vol1/sec3/cultural/ch28arch/files/Programmatic_Agreement_for_Section_106.pdf)) regarding compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The PA was developed in order to establish an efficient and effective program alternative for taking into account effects of the Federal-aid Highway Program on historic properties in California. Implementation of appropriate stipulations in the PA would result in compliance with section 106 of the NHPA. The FHWA's responsibilities under the PA have been assigned to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as part of the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program (23 CFR part 327).

A Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR), dated June 2010, and Supplemental HPSR, dated November 2010, were prepared to document cultural resource conditions in the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). The HPSR included a Historic Resource Evaluation Report, dated May 2010, and an Archaeological Survey Report, dated April 2010. The HPSR and associated documents were prepared in accordance with the PA. Historic archeological and built environmental resources were identified and evaluated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Two archaeological sites were located within the project's APE (CA-RIV-706H and CA-RIV-1029). CA-RIV-706H is a historic site identified to contain low-density scatter of glass and ceramic artifacts. Field inspection indicated that CA-RIV-706H is a small unassociated trash deposit, which has been extensively spread by plowing and road construction grading. CA-RIV-706H was determined, by Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff (PQS) or consultant who meets the Caltrans Archaeological Qualification Standards, to meet the criteria in the PA Attachment 4 as a property exempt from evaluation. CA-RIV-1029 was also determined to be not eligible for listing in the NRHP, due to lack of associations with important historic events or lives of significant persons and lacking architectural merit and being otherwise unlikely to yield information important in history or prehistory. Also within the APE are 21 bridges or roadway overcrossings/undercrossing structures. Caltrans determined that these bridges are all categorized as "5, not eligible for NRHP" due to the fact that they would not be 50 years old at the proposed time of construction. In accordance to the PA Stipulation IX.A and 36 CFR section 800.4(d)(1), Caltrans has determined, in consultation with SHPO, a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this undertaking. A concurrence letter from the SHPO was received on August 2, 2010.

On October 30, 2007, an archaeologist from Jones and Stokes, on behalf of Caltrans, District 11, contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and requested that NAHC search their

Sacred Lands File and provide a list of potentially interested Native American contacts. The NAHC responded in writing on November 1, 2007, stating that a search of their Sacred Lands Database did not yield any sacred lands or traditional cultural properties within the project area. The NAHC also provided a list of ten Native American contacts in Riverside County. Based on consultation between the tribal contacts and Caltrans, an agreement was reached in which Caltrans agreed to monitor portions of the project area. Final monitoring locations would be delineated in the project's Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) package. The requirement for cultural resources monitoring would be written into the Environmental Commitment Record. An environmental commitment record tracks and documents the completion of Environmental Commitments. Environmental Commitments are measures implemented in order to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate a real or potential environmental impact.

**Endangered Species**- Federally endangered and/or threatened plants and animal are known to occur within the project Biological Study Area (BSA). Currently no consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has occurred.

The proposed project is identified in the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) as a "Planned Road". The MSHCP established a multiple species conservation program to minimize and mitigate habitat loss and incidental take of "Covered Species" in association with covered activities implemented by the permittees. Caltrans is a permittee to the MSHCP. The proposed project activity is a "Covered Activity" (MSHCP Vol. I, Section 7.3.5) under the MSHCP and has portions that occur inside and outside of "Criteria Areas". Coverage under the MSHCP provides an expedited process for biological resource permitting and approvals. Three Federally listed species are potentially present within the BSA, specifically Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*), California coastal gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), and Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*). The proposed project occurs within the long-term HCP under section 10 of Federal Endangered Species Act for the Stephens' kangaroo rat. Two species of Federally listed plants are present, namely the San Jacinto Valley crownscale (*Atriplex coronata var. notatior*) and thread-leaved Brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*).

**Public Hearing**- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

### **Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required**

**Basic Project Purpose**- The basic project purpose comprises the fundamental, essential, or irreducible purpose of the proposed project, and is used by the Corps to determine whether the applicant's project is water dependent. The basic project purpose for the proposed project is vehicular transportation. The project is not water dependent.

**Overall Project Purpose**- The overall project purpose serves as the basis for the Corps' section 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis and is determined by further defining the basic project purpose in a

manner that more specifically describes the applicant's goals for the project, and which allows a reasonable range of alternatives to be analyzed. The overall project purpose for the proposed project is to reduce existing traffic congestion, accommodate future travel demand and improve operational mobility for increased safety along the I-215 corridor, between Nuevo Road and Scott Road.

Caltrans is currently developing alternatives, including the no-build alternative.

### **Additional Project Information**

**Baseline information-** The proposed project spans the area from just south of the I-215/Scott Road interchange to just south of the I-215/Nuevo Road interchange. It includes a total of eight I-215 interchanges. This segment of I-215 is currently a four-lane facility (two lanes in each direction); it does not provide adequate capacity to accommodate existing demand and the future projected growth in the surrounding area. Growth projections by the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) indicate population in western Riverside County is expected to increase by more than 100 percent by 2020. I-215 through the project area has been identified in the California Governor's "Go California" initiative to relieve congestion. In addition, the segment of I-215 within the project limits has been identified as a deficient roadway segment in the 2007 Riverside County Congestion Management Program (CMP), adopted by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) in December of 2007. The designation of this roadway segment as deficient requires RCTC to prepare a deficiency plan to add capacity to address the existing congested conditions. The proposed project fulfills this requirement.

The proposed project crosses three major watercourses. From south to north, they are Salt Creek, Romoland Channel, and the San Jacinto River. In addition to the major crossings, there are approximately 32 local stream crossings. The Salt Creek Channel crossing is an existing trapezoidal channel with a base width of 325 feet and 2:1 slopes. Salt Creek appears to be a natural drainage that has been channelized. The Paloma Wash tributary area originates in foothills west of the I-215 and ends at its confluence with the Salt Creek Channel. Flow generally continues from south to north and meanders underneath the I-215 via culverts and channels. Flow first crosses under the I-215 through a double six-foot-by-five-foot reinforced concrete box (RCB) culvert approximately 2,700 feet south of Scott Road, within the limits of the proposed project. It then crosses back to west side of I-215 through double eight-foot-by-five-foot RCB culvert, located approximately 6,500 feet north of Scott Road. From this point, flow meanders from south north to an earthen ditch that parallels I-215 from Garbani Road to Salt Creek Channel. The Romoland Flood Control Channel drainage area for the I-215 crossing covers approximately 5,800 acres. The Romoland Channel is an earthen trapezoidal channel at the crossing and has a base width of 64 feet and side slopes of 2:1. At the crossing, the tributary area to the channel is approximately 7,500 acres with a design flow of 3,673 cfs. San Jacinto River passes under the I-215 between the city of Perris and Sun City and discharges to Canyon Lake within five miles downstream. The San Jacinto River and Perris Valley Channel are tributaries to the crossing facility and confluence approximately 1,000 feet northeast of the I-215. The drainage system includes eight overflow box culverts and the San Jacinto River Bridge. The crossing of San Jacinto River creates an overtopping condition of the I-215 roadway under the existing condition. The existing capacity of the crossing is

approximately 11,000 cfs and is only about 25 percent of the expected 100-year frequency flow of over 45,000 cfs; therefore, the existing crossing along with a number of overflow features do not provide a two-year storm frequency level protection. In addition, a portion of the project corridor south of San Jacinto Avenue is susceptible to flood inundation according to the city of Perris General Plan.

**Project description-** The RCTC, in coordination with Caltrans, proposes to widen approximately 12.5 miles of I-215 between Scott Road and Nuevo Road. The proposed project would widen I-215 from four mixed-flow lanes to six mixed-flow lanes. The third lane would be added in each direction within the median from Scott Road to approximately 1 mile north of the I-215/State Route (SR)-74 East interchange and added along the outside of the existing I-215 lanes from approximately 1 mile north of the I-215/SR-74 East interchange to Nuevo Road. The proposed project includes widening of the Salt Creek bridges, Romoland Flood Control Channel bridges, San Jacinto River bridges, and Ethanac (SR-74 East) overhead, and replacement of the Perris Boulevard and D Street on-ramp overcrossings. In areas where the existing southbound or northbound roadbed has a crown cross-section, the existing lanes would be re-contoured to provide a consistent cross fall for drainage from the inside median to the outside edge of traveled way. Other proposed project improvements include reconstruction of the median shoulder through areas of outside widening, realignment and widening of Perris Boulevard and the D Street ramps, ramp metering at the D Street on-ramp, and installation or reconstruction of concrete or thrie beam median barrier, two new sound walls, and several retaining walls. Work would be contained within the Caltrans Right of Way.

Project activities within waters of the U.S. would include permanent placement of bridge piers and structure foundations; and rock rip rap scour protection would be included in Salt Creek. Areas temporarily impacted by project activities would be restored to pre-existing conditions following construction. Fill material would consist of 303 cubic yards (CY) of native earth, 467 CY of reinforced concrete, and 1360 CY of rock rip rap. Dredging is not proposed for the proposed project.

**Proposed Mitigation** – The proposed mitigation may change as a result of comments received in response to this public notice, the applicant's response to those comments, and/or the need for the project to comply with the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. In consideration of the above, the proposed mitigation sequence (avoidance/minimization/compensation), as applied to the proposed project, is summarized below:

The proposed project has been designed to limit grading to the minimum extent necessary to implement the proposed project. Current design plans have also been refined to further reduce impacts to waters of the U.S. to the maximum extent practicable subsequent to the publication, from Caltrans, of impacts within the Final Natural Environmental Study, dated January 2011; Final Jurisdictional Delineation Report by Caltrans, Dated April 2010; Supplemental Jurisdictional Delineation by Caltrans, dated February 2012; and Final Initial Study (IS) (Mitigated Negative Declaration [MND])/Environmental Assessment (EA) (Finding of No Significant Impact [FONSI]) by Caltrans, dated April 2011. Compensation is proposed to be provided through land acquisition (creation of alkali vernal pools) as detailed in Western Riverside County MSHCP Habitat Mitigation Maintenance and Monitoring Plan

and payment of an in-lieu fee program and on-site restoration. In addition, the applicant proposes to implement the following measures:

1. Environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) will be delineated in the field with bright orange ESA fencing during construction.
2. Storm water runoff, surface erosion, and siltation would be controlled during construction with implementation of standard storm water best management practices (BMPs), which will be specified in the construction contractor's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
3. Water pollution and erosion control plans will be developed and implemented in accordance with RWQCB requirements and will ensure that no fluids or sediment from construction will enter into the ESA fenced areas.
4. No erodible materials will be deposited into watercourses or areas demarcated with ESA fencing.
5. Brush, loose soils, or other debris material will not be stockpiled within stream channels or on adjacent banks.
6. Work that cannot be conducted without placing equipment or personnel in riparian vegetation will be timed to avoid the breeding season of riparian-associated species identified in the MSHCP Species Objective No. 7.
7. If stream flows must be diverted, the diversions will be conducted using natural grading, sandbags or other methods requiring minimal in-stream impacts. Silt fencing or other sediment trapping materials will be installed at the downstream end of construction activity to minimize the transport of sediments offsite. Settling ponds where sediment is collected will be cleaned out in a manner that prevents the sediment from reentering the stream. Care will be exercised when removing silt fences, as feasible, to prevent debris or sediment from returning to the stream.
8. All equipment maintenance, staging, and dispensing of fuel, oil, coolant, or any other toxic substances will occur only in designated areas within the limits of the Project. These designated areas will be clearly marked and located in such a manner as to contain runoff.

**Proposed Special Conditions**

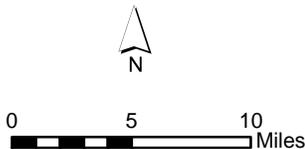
No special conditions are proposed at this time, but it is expected special conditions would be added to any Corps permit issued for the proposed project or an alternative.

For additional information please call Sophia Huynh of my staff at 213-452-3357 or via e-mail at Sophia.C.Huynh@usace.army.mil. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Division.



**Legend**

 Project Site



**FIGURE 1**  
**PROJECT VICINITY**

**INTERSTATE 215 WIDENING PROJECT  
FROM SCOTT ROAD TO NUEVO ROAD**

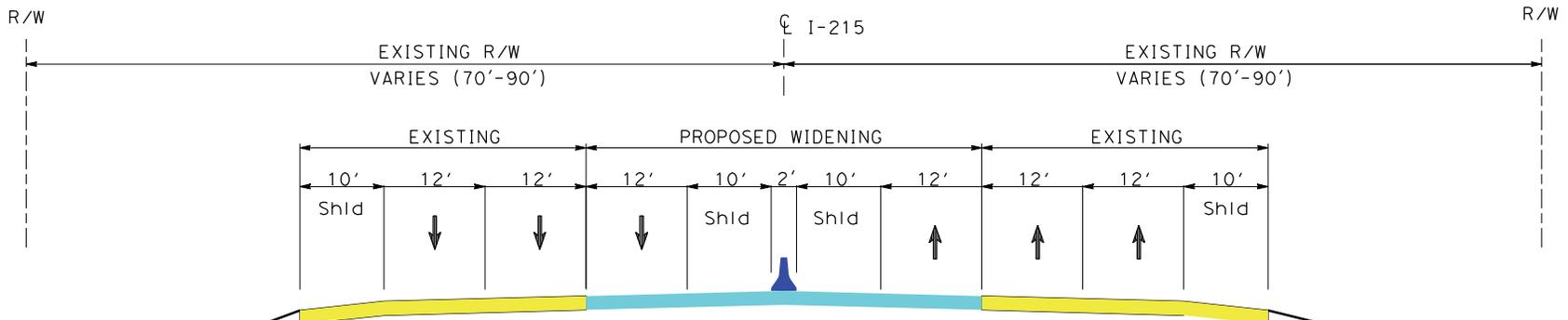
PROJECT NO.: 29866457

DATE: FEBRUARY 2012

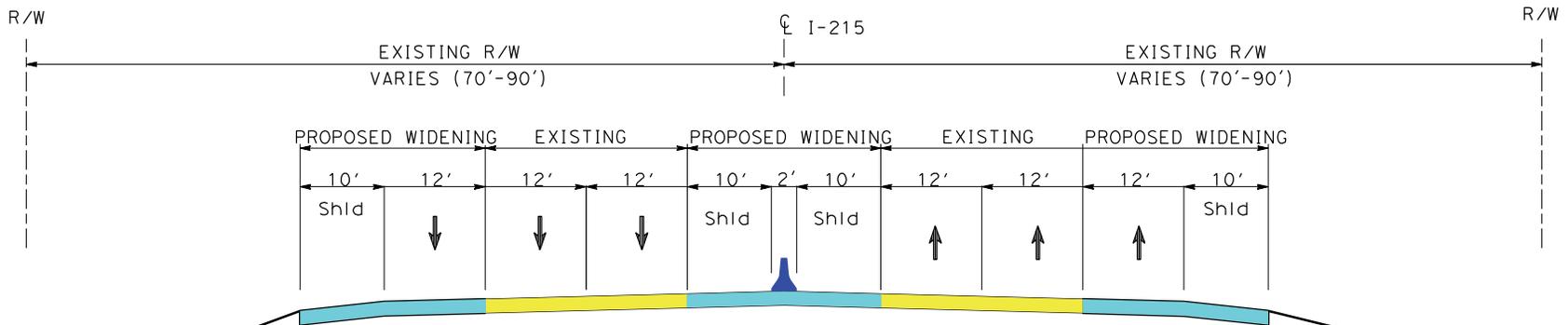


Source: ArcGIS Online, DeLorme World Basemap, 2009.

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**ROUTE I-215 TYPICAL CROSS SECTION  
SCOTT ROAD TO ROUTE 74**



**ROUTE I-215 TYPICAL CROSS SECTION  
ROUTE 74 TO NUEVO ROAD**

SOURCE: PBS&J (2007)