



US Route 101 Richardson Grove Operational Improvement Project Fact Sheet

PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT (Final Environmental Impact Report [FEIR] pages 2 – 16)

This project will allow access for industry-standard sized trucks on US Route 101 through Richardson Grove State Park and provide for compliance with the Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA). These STAA trucks can be longer than the currently allowed California legal trucks. This project also improves safety for recreational vehicles and all users of this portion of Route 101. This project has been a longstanding priority for both Caltrans and the County of Humboldt. It is currently identified as a need in the Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan developed by the local governments.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE (FEIR pages 17-25, Rejected Alternatives pages 25-33)

The project is programmed for \$5.5 million and the proposed project alternative is described below.

- Make minor adjustments to the alignment, including minor spot widening where necessary, to accommodate STAA truck access. Lowering the speed limit through Richardson Grove will not change the geometry of the curves, and, therefore, will not provide for STAA truck access.
- Provide two 12-foot travel lanes and 2-foot paved shoulders where obtainable, as old growth redwood trees will encroach into the shoulder in some locations.
- Construct a below-the-road retaining wall at the north end of the project outside of the State Park to allow construction of 4-foot shoulders.
- Overlay existing pavement.
- Replace four existing culverts and extend one culvert.

TREES (FEIR pages 103-116)

Caltrans will not remove any old growth redwood trees for this project.

Thirty trees will need to be removed in the park and 54 trees removed for the total project. Only two redwoods are proposed for removal in the park, one six-inch and one seven-inch diameter redwood tree. The largest tree proposed for removal in the park is a 24-inch diameter tan oak. The project has evolved in response to public comments and as a result of coordination with resource and regulatory agencies. A design modification at the proposed retaining wall included moving the wall from the west side of the highway to the east side, shortening the length by approximately 100 feet, and making the wall below the highway. This modification reduced the tree removal at the wall location from 30 trees to five.

All excavation below the finish grade (except for the culvert work) will be done with shovels, pick axes, pneumatic excavators (such as air spade), or other non-mechanized methods to minimize disturbance or damage to the roots from large equipment. In addition, it is not anticipated that most of the larger roots would have to be cut, as excavation will likely be done with a pneumatic excavator that will clear the soil away from the roots with little to no damage to the roots. During construction, irrigation will be provided during the summer to redwood trees affected by excavation within the structural root zone. The road was originally constructed in 1915 and the trees have coexisted adjacent to the highway in apparent good health for over 90 years.

Work will occur within the structural root zone (3 times the diameter of the tree) of 86 trees total.

VISUAL CHARACTER (FEIR pages 60-70)

Richardson Grove State Park has been called the “Gateway to the Redwoods” or the “Redwood Curtain” and this park ambience will not be altered substantially as a result of this project. A curvilinear highway with minimal shoulders and the presence of large redwoods abutting the shoulder providing a canopy over the road will not change after construction.

The only work proposed in the segment of the roadway closely adjacent to campsites would be some culvert repair, repaving, and re-stripping.

NOTE – Before and after visual renderings of the three areas with the most marked changes are on FEIR pages 244-249)

CONSTRUCTION

- To begin Winter or Spring 2011, weather permitting.
- Prior to construction, an informational public open house will be held.
- A hotline will be available to report issues during construction.

