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[Home](#) | [Programs](#) | [Design](#) | [Landscape Architecture and Community Livability](#)
[Scenic Highways](#)

Scenic Highways

California State Scenic Highways



The above photo shows the Gaviota Coast State Scenic Highway, in the County of Santa Barbara. This officially designated segment of Highway 101 travels through one of the longest remaining rural coastlines in southern California, along 21 miles from the City of Goleta's western boundary, to Route 1 at Las Cruces. Photo credit: County of Santa Barbara Gaviota Coast Scenic Highway Proposal.

Introduction

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) manages the State Scenic Highway Program. Caltrans provides guidance to local government agencies, community organizations and citizens that are pursuing the official designation of a State Scenic Highway.

Scenic Highway Program History

In 1963, the State Legislature established the California Scenic Highway Program through Senate Bill 1467 (Farr). The bill declared:

"The development of scenic highways will not only add to the pleasure of the residents of this State, but will also play an important role in encouraging the growth of the recreation and tourist industries upon which the economy of many areas of this State depend."

Senate Bill 1467 added Sections 260 through 263 to the Streets and Highways Code. In these statutes the State proclaims intent to:

"establish the State's responsibility for the protection and enhancement of California's natural scenic beauty by identifying those portions of the State highway system which, together with adjacent scenic corridors, require special conservation treatment." (Scenic corridors consist of

land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside the highway right-of-way, and is comprised primarily of scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance, and/or jurisdictional lines determine the corridor boundaries.)

Existing law provides Caltrans with full possession and control of all State highways. This legislation places the Scenic Highway Program under the stewardship of Caltrans.

The legislation further declares the intent of the State to assign responsibility for the regulation of land use and development along scenic highways to the appropriate State and local governmental agencies. A county highway component was later added to the Scenic Highway Program in Section 154 of the Streets and Highways Code.

Scenic Highways Guidelines

- Provides guidance on the process for officially designating a California State Scenic Highway (PDF is undergoing an update for ADA compatibility)

Example of Scenic Highway Proposal and Corridor Protection Program

- Copy of 10/14/2016 Letter of Intent for the State Highway Designation of Highway 101 Along the Gaviota Coast (PDF)

State Scenic Highway Map



Scenic Highway System Lists

- List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways (XLSX)
- List of Officially Designated County Scenic Highways* (PDF)

*Obtaining State recognition as an officially designated County Scenic Highway requires following the same Scenic Highway Program process that applies to State Routes. See the Scenic Highway Guidelines (PDF) *for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions

- [Click here for Frequently Asked Questions about the Scenic Highway Program](#)

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