

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN BENITO

A RESOLUTION OF THE SAN BENITO) Resolution No. 2011- 61
COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS)
SUPPORTING THE INCORPORATION)
OF NEW DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR THE)
PROPOSED HIGHWAY 156)
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT)
_____)

WHEREAS, the Highway 156 Improvement Project as currently proposed by the California Department of Transportation has been a source of division and concern in San Benito County;

WHEREAS, much of the local opposition to the project has been the result of the proposed project "footprint" that would result in the loss of prime agricultural farmland;

WHEREAS, the currently proposed project would negatively impact the visual aesthetics of the rural and pristine San Juan valley;

WHEREAS, as a result of the substantial local concern regarding the proposed 156 improvements, a small group of community leaders recently formed a working group to review the proposed project;

WHEREAS, the working group has formulated a group of recommended design concepts that would greatly improve the proposed 156 project, reduce the impact on agricultural lands, and reduce the visual impact on the project;

WHEREAS, the proposed design concepts were presented to the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Benito on June 7, 2011, and are wholeheartedly supported by the Board;

WHEREAS, the key elements of the new design concepts are as follows:

- Convert the current existing Route 156 paved section into a 20 foot wide access road;
- Provide a 5.5 mile new multi-use trail adjacent to the 20 foot wide access road as an active transportation (bicycling and walking) route between Hollister and San Juan Bautista as additional trails have been recognized as a need within San Benito County;
- Provide a new four lane road, which would utilize a minimum of needed right of way, immediately south of the converted Route 156, reducing the loss of prime farmland;
- Provide roundabouts as appropriate to increase traffic flow and safety in the transition to the parallel access road, reducing delay and noise impacts at intersections;

- Consider new water retention ponds, complemented by a trapezoidal ditch, in a manner which would increase water retention without unnecessarily converting additional farmland; and,
- Add a barrier wall in lieu of a 46 foot wide center median, reducing the impact on farmland and resulting in a safer roadway.

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has determined that the suggested design concepts would significantly improve the proposed project by:

- Increasing intersection safety;
- Reducing traffic delay at intersections;
- Reducing traffic noise at intersections;
- Reducing impact on farmland by leaving as much prime farmland undisturbed as possible;
- Providing additional water retention areas; and,
- Reducing the visual impact of the project by replacing the proposed urban-appropriate freeway with a four lane freeway, adjacent access road, and trail which would complement the local setting.

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors further finds that the proposed design concepts would reduce the environmental impacts of the proposed project; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors strongly supports the incorporation of the new design concepts into the proposed project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the San Benito County Board of Supervisors that the Board of Supervisors unanimously supports the proposed design concepts attached hereto as Exhibit 1 and formally requests that these ideas be incorporated by the California Department of Transportation into the proposed project.

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PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN BENITO THIS 12TH OF JULY, 2011 BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

Ayes:	Supervisor(s):	BARRIOS, DE LA CRUZ, BOTELHO, RIVAS, MUENZER
Noes:	Supervisor(s):	NONE
Absent:	Supervisor(s):	NONE
Abstain:	Supervisor(s):	NONE

By: *Margie Barrios*
Margie Barrios, Chair
San Benito County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Denise R. Thome
Clerk of the San Benito County
Board of Supervisors

By: *Denise R. Thome*
Denise R. Thome, Clerk

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

Matthew W. Granger
County Counsel

By: *Barbara Thompson*
Matthew W. Granger, County Counsel

Date: *7/12/11*

Date: *7/6/11*

Engineering Notes

The attached drawings provide a community "informed consent" preferred alternative to Route 156 between San Juan Bautista and Hollister. The proposed alternative provides expanded road capacity and safety while allowing the project to go forward with community approval. Sharing this approach is anticipated to allow the project to go forward in a timely manner.

The proposal achieves the following mutually shared objectives and benefits:

Objectives

- Meet the needs for local property access while developing improved regional traffic flow (current and future).
- Build a working solution while fostering an improved working relationship among stakeholders
- Reduce negative impacts to farmlands
- Provide the safest possible intersections
- Reduced intersection delays
- Provide additional water retention areas
- Provide a design that incorporates other community values, including a trail, and preserves the rural character of this land.
- Reduce noise and air pollution
- Meet other environmental needs

Design details and benefits:

- converts existing Route 156 paved section into a 20 foot wide access road to allow local land owners access to their buildings and farms. (meets fire code and handles large vehicles)
- provides a new multi-use trail as an active transportation (bicycling and walking) route between Hollister and San Juan Bautista (5.5 mile link).
- Provides a new four lane road immediately to the south of the converted Route 156. (the new layout only uses 160 feet of right-of-way.)
- Provides three roundabouts (at Alameda, Bixby Road and at Union Roads) to maximize access and thru movements. It is at these three roundabouts that the parallel access route will connect to all farming and residential properties.
- The access road and trail will make use of the roundabout controlled intersections in order to get to other destinations. The use of three roundabouts is expected to minimize out of travel access to farms and residential properties.
- Two lane roundabouts will accommodate projected traffic with less delay than signalized intersections while providing greater safety, and fully accommodating all vehicle types. Roundabouts will operate with two entering lanes for Route 156 traffic, and with 1-2 lanes (as shown in each drawing) for each entering roadway.
- New water retention ponds have been located around the roundabouts in order minimize the further taking of precious farmland. These ponds are to be complemented by a trapezoidal ditch for sections between intersections along the south side of the new road.

- The converted Old 156 includes a grape arbor separator. Retention areas should fully accommodate drainage needs.
- Other features of this alternate is the continuation of the current design for Route 156 between Highway 101 and The Alameda using a jersey barrier wall in lieu of a 46 foot wide center median. This change will significantly reduce the impact on farmlands, while creating a safer roadway.

Note: This alternate layout was developed for discussion purposes only. Greater detail can be provided once a general agreement is reached.

Comments and additional notes

Departments of Transportation are routinely installing median barriers along freeways and other high-speed roads to reduce crossover crashes that often involve multiple fatalities. The multiple benefits of a vertical median barrier, (jersey barrier, guardrail, or stayed cable systems) is to eliminate the need for wide-open medians. A median barrier similar to the one used on approach to Alameda is a well proven, working design.

To further reduce impact on farmlands a trapezoidal channel is provided along the south side of the new four-lane roadway. A 16 feet wide channel built to an appropriate depth should accommodate peak storm/event water runoff and reducing the likelihood of water from the highway flowing into farmlands. Adding a guardrail barrier along the South side of the edge of shoulder, similar to the section of 156 west of San Juan Bautista, enables the trapezoidal ditch to be placed closer to the new highway. This drainage ditch proposal continues from just west of Breen Road to Union Road.

If roundabouts are well landscaped they will announce to drivers their arrival at San Juan Bautista and Hollister, especially if attractive wayfinding signs are placed in and near the new islands. The shared pathway has been shown in the engineering drawings on the Southside of Old 156. Placed in this location the feature eliminate conflicts at driveways and side streets, and avoids trail users having to cross Old 156 to cross over New 156. There are advantages and disadvantages of having the trail on the north or Southside of Old 156. The photomorph shows the North side option. Thus both locations are illustrated. This is an issue that the community needs to discuss and resolve the best location for them.

Roundabouts have been provided at the intersections of The Alameda, Bixby Road and Union Road. Roundabouts are recommended, as the crash history of roundabouts in all states, at national levels, and internationally is superior to signalized intersection in both total number of crashes and severity. Although roundabouts require all vehicles to slow, they reduce noise levels as a significant number of vehicles will not have to stop, and many others, especially professional truck drivers, will adjust their speed to avoid a full stop, further reducing noise levels.

Attached is simply an alternate idea for a modified Route 156 between San Juan Bautista and Hollister. This alternate idea converts existing pavement of Route 156 to a pedestrian/bicycle/ access route with a new four lane road to the south with access via by three roundabouts at The Alameda, Bixby Road and at Union Road. To assist with controlling the water some water retention ponds have been located around the roundabouts and a trapezoidal ditch is suggested along the south side of the new road. Other features of this alternate is the continuation of the current design for Route 156 between Highway 101 and The Alameda that utilizes a stone faced barrier wall to significantly reduce the impact on farmlands and create a much safer roadway.

This alternate layout was developed in a very short time, on a very limited budget and so many of the typical refinements of a typical concept are not included.

The proposed roundabouts are proposed as two lane roundabouts with one or two entering lanes based on the existing lane arrangement minus some turn lanes that are usually not required when converting signalized intersections to roundabouts. Second, the projected 2035 daily traffic volume should be within the capacity of two lane roundabouts.

Objectives

- * Reduce impact on farmland
- * Provide the safest intersections
- * Reduce intersection delay
- * Provide additional water retention areas
- * Reduce noise

Comments

Because Departments of Transportation across the US are installing barriers along freeway medians to stop crossover crashes that often involve multiple fatalities. The benefit of a median barrier, jersey barrier, guardrail, stayed cable is that it eliminates the need for a wide median, a very important consideration in this case because of the richness and value of the farmland. A median barrier could be a continuation of the existing barrier west of The Alameda to Highway

101, guardrail or a standard Jersey barrier. Although the existing barrier wall is more appropriate for this area.

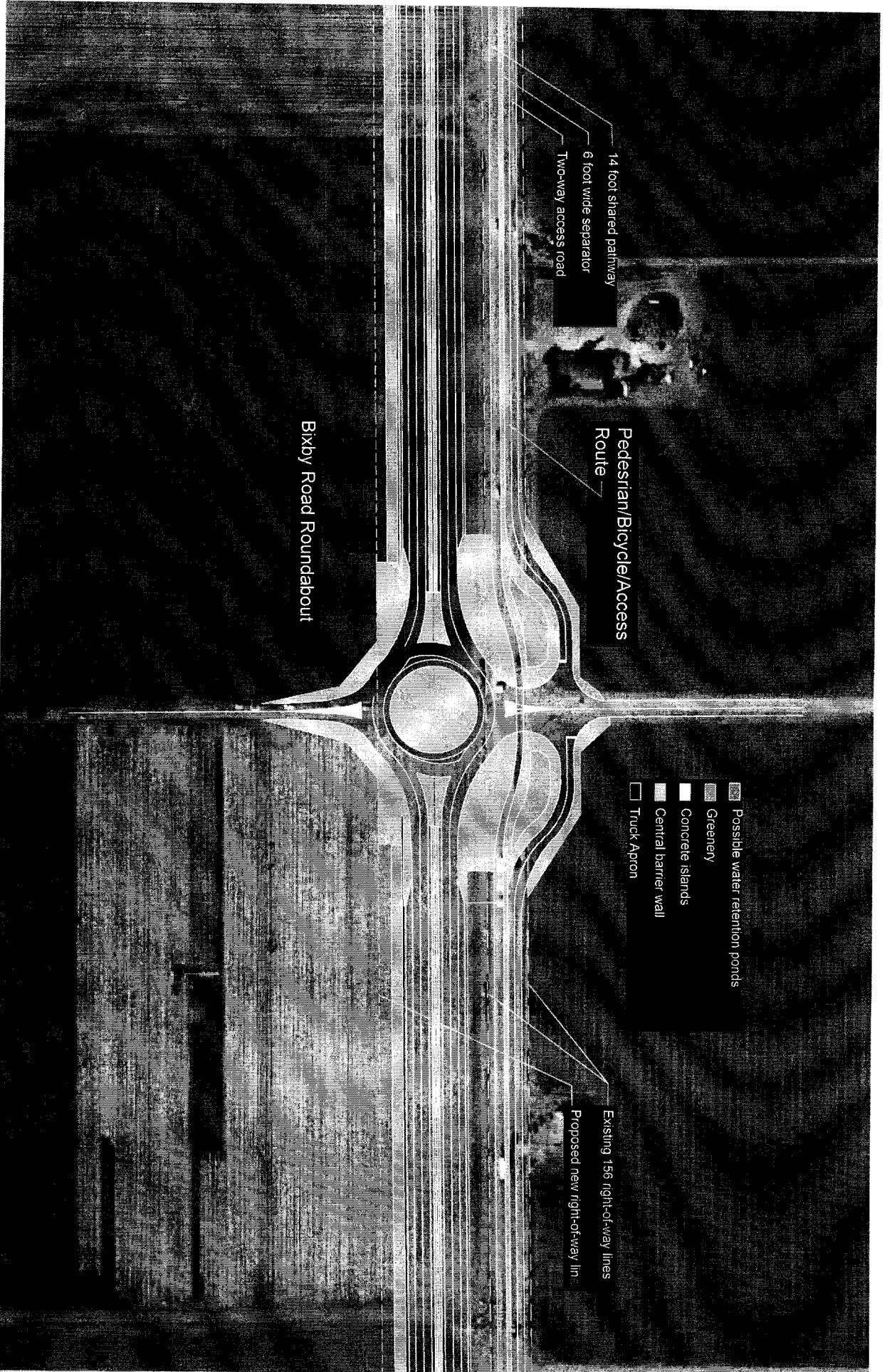
A downside of no median and a median barrier is that water retention must be provided to the side of the expressway. For that purpose a trapezoidal channel is recommended along the southside 16 feet wide to an appropriate depth to accommodate the water runoff. To further reduce the cross section a barrier is recommended along the southside of the edge of shoulder to allow for a narrow deep rather than a wide and shallow retention area. This barrier would continue the just west of Breen Road to Union Road. These changes could reduce impact on farmland by approximately 10 acres.

Roundabouts have been provided at the intersections of The Alameda, Bixby Road and Union Road. Roundabouts are recommended as the crash history is superior to signalized intersection in both total number and severity. Although a roundabout will require all vehicles to slow, they should reduce noise levels as a significant number of vehicles will not have to stop, and many others, especially professional truck drivers, will adjust their speed to avoid a full stop further reducing noise levels.

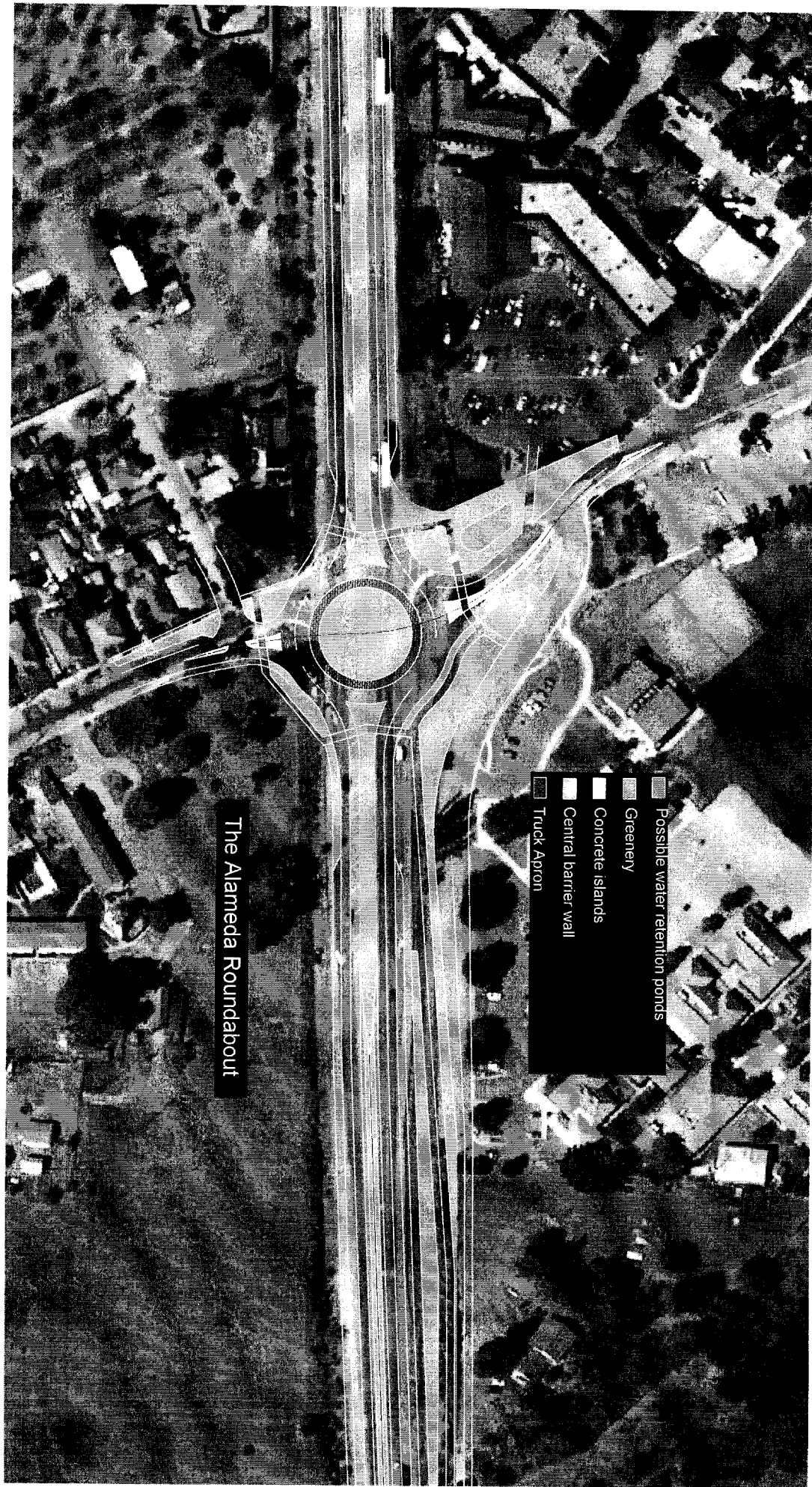
Although the roundabouts will require additional area around each roundabout they will reduce the overall land take because for the same traffic volumes fewer cross or turn lanes will be required and any extra space around the roundabouts could be used for water retention ponds as shown.

If the roundabouts are well landscaped they could announce to drivers their arrival at San Juan Bautista and Holster, especially if signs to that effect are included within the central islands outside of the standard clear zones.

BIXBY ROAD

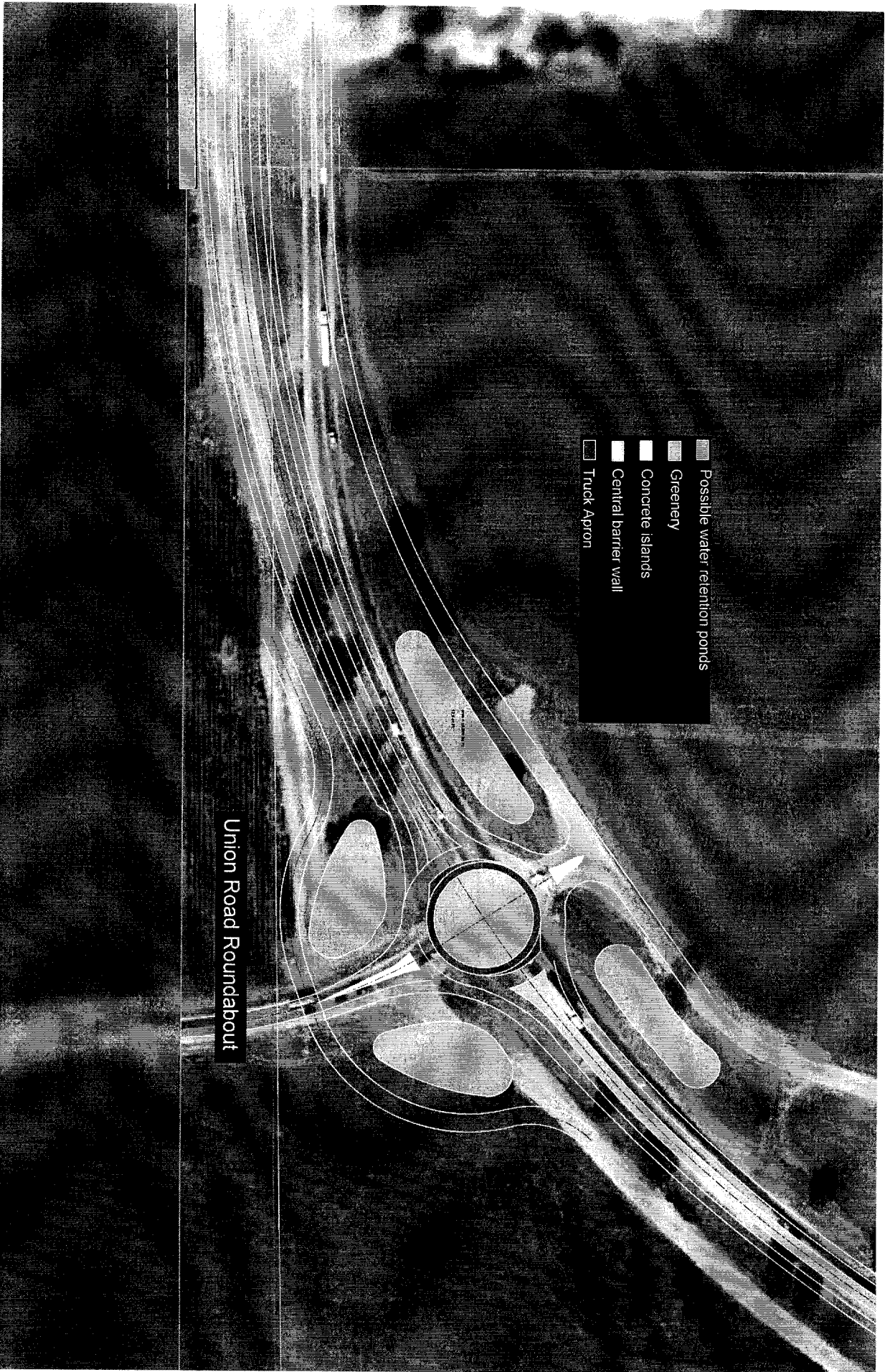


ALAMEDA ROUNDABOUT



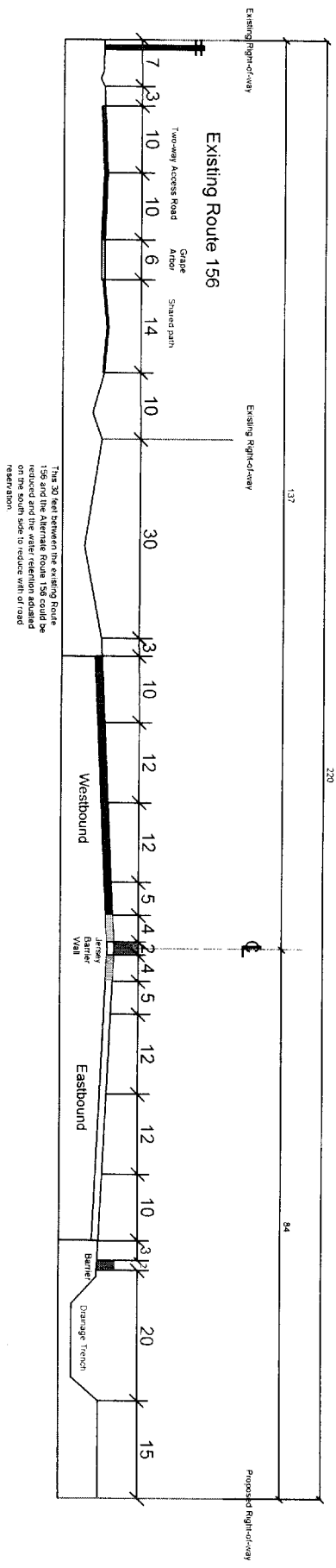
The Alameda Roundabout

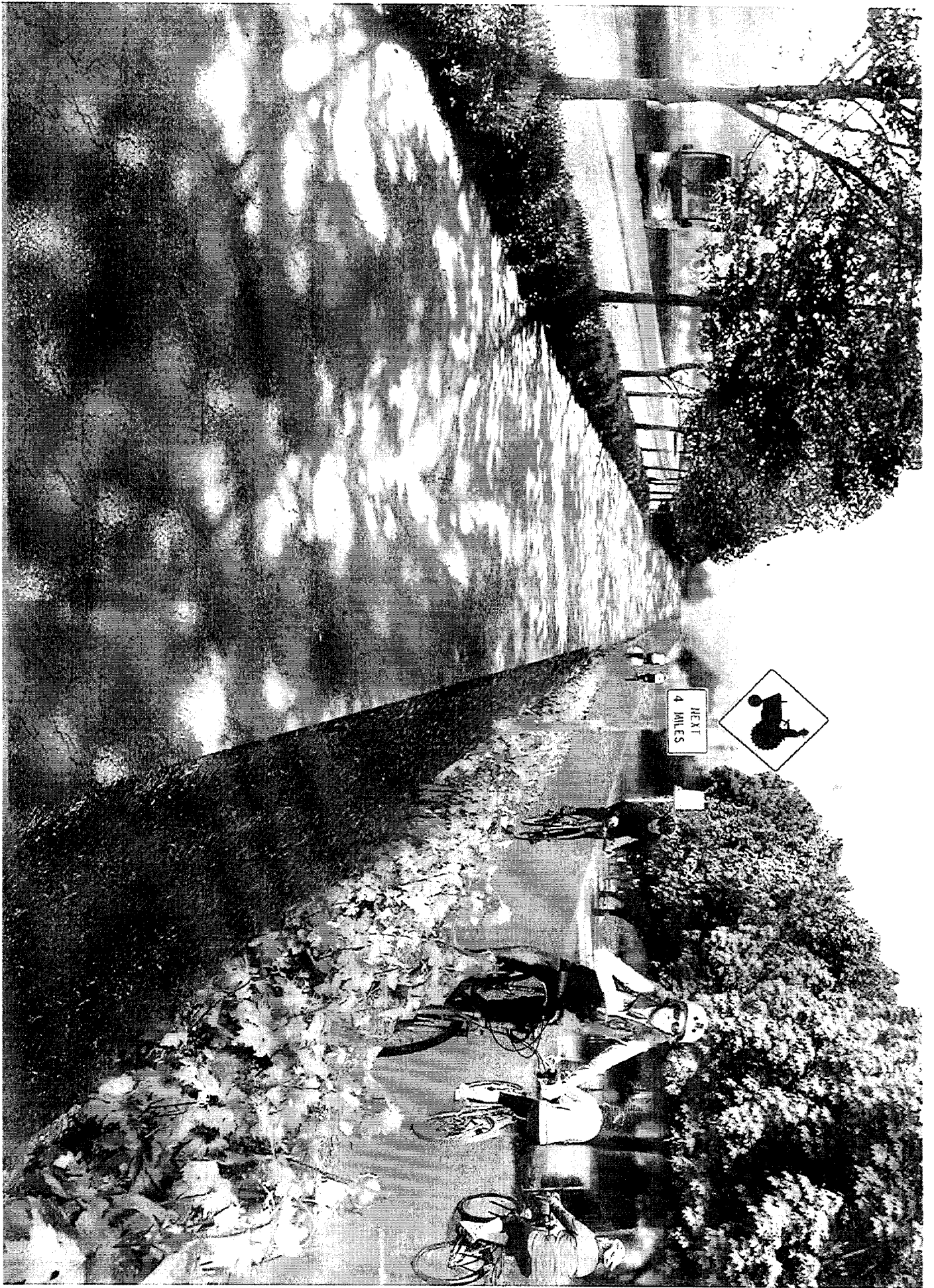
UNION ROAD ROUNDABOUT



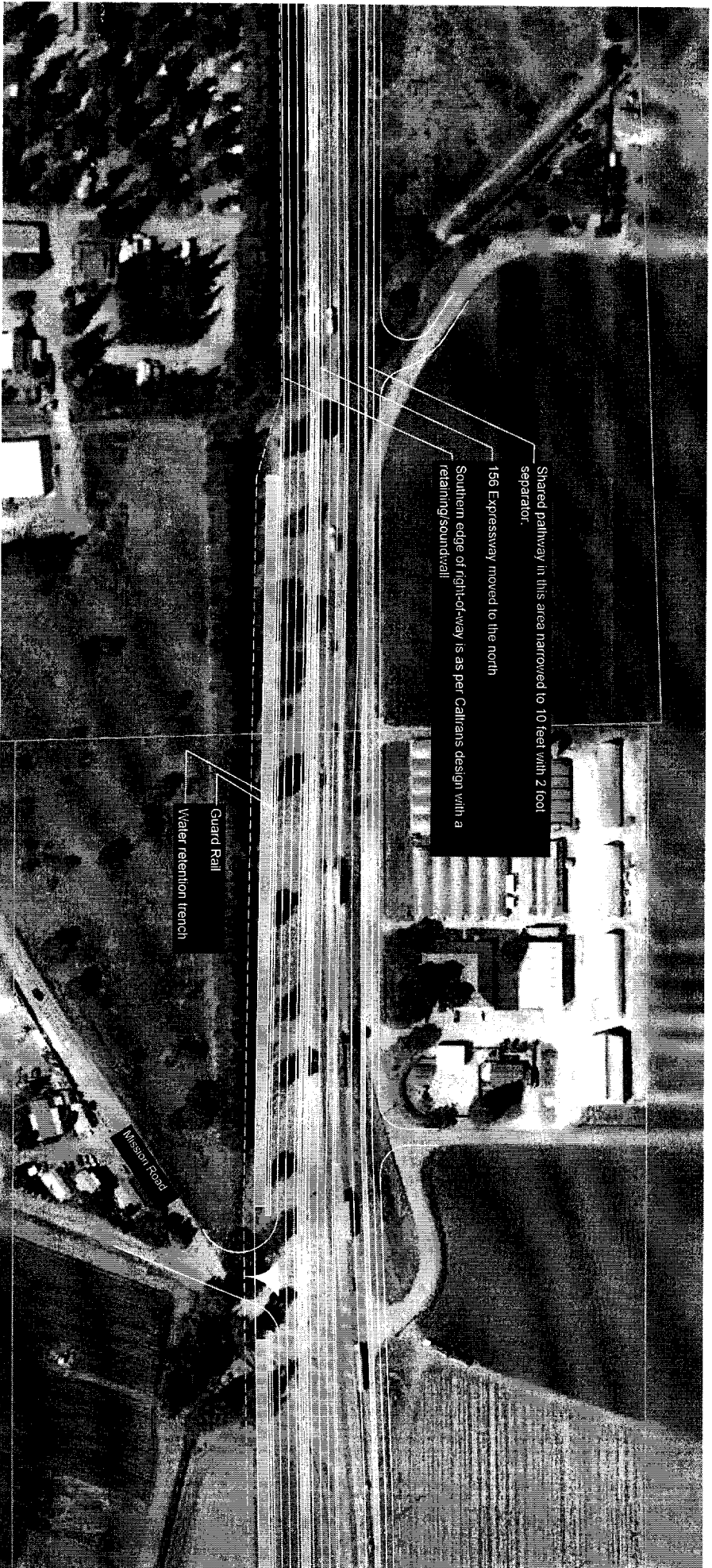
SAN JUAN BAULTSTA CROSS SECTION

Route 156

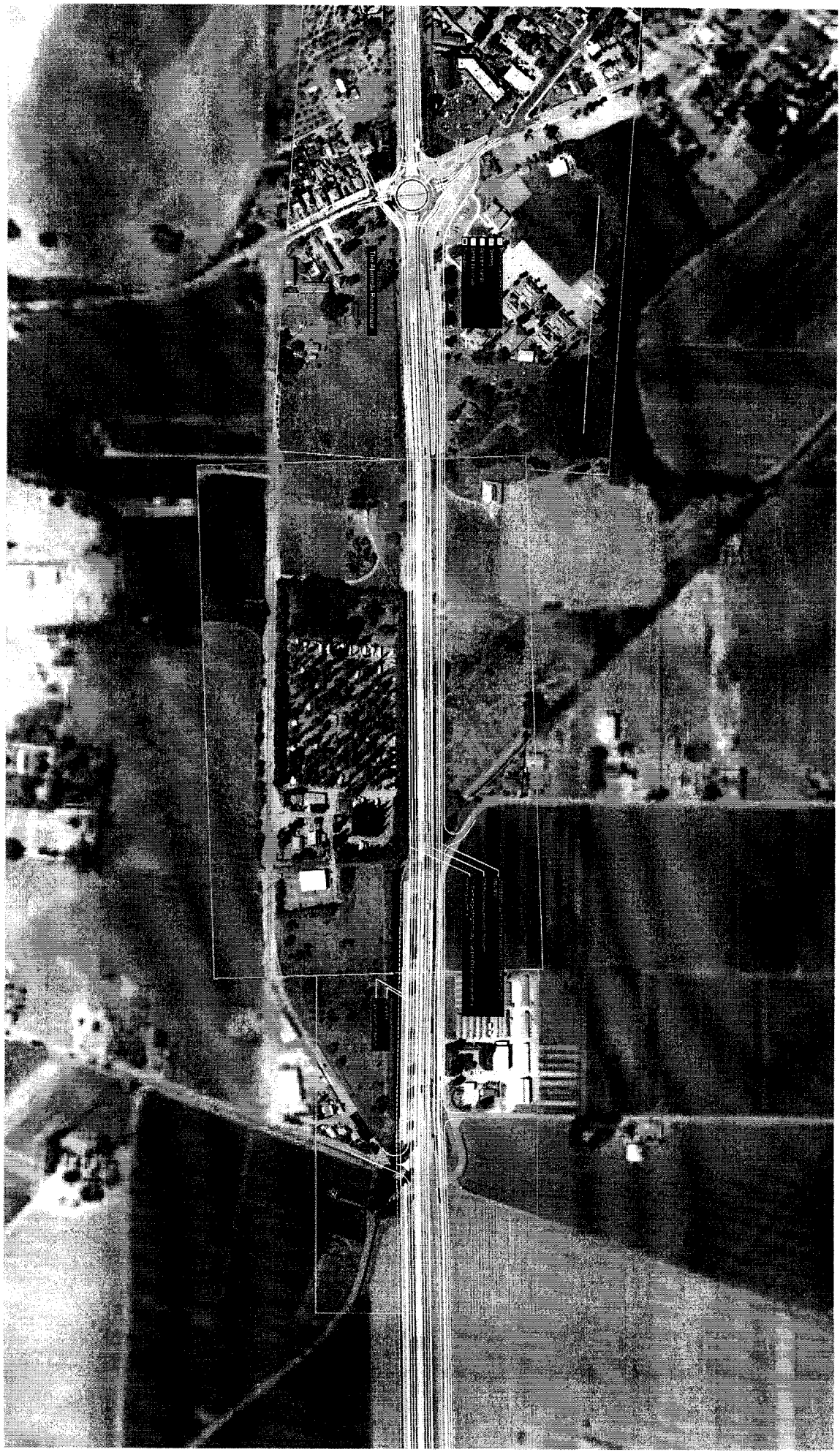




BREEN



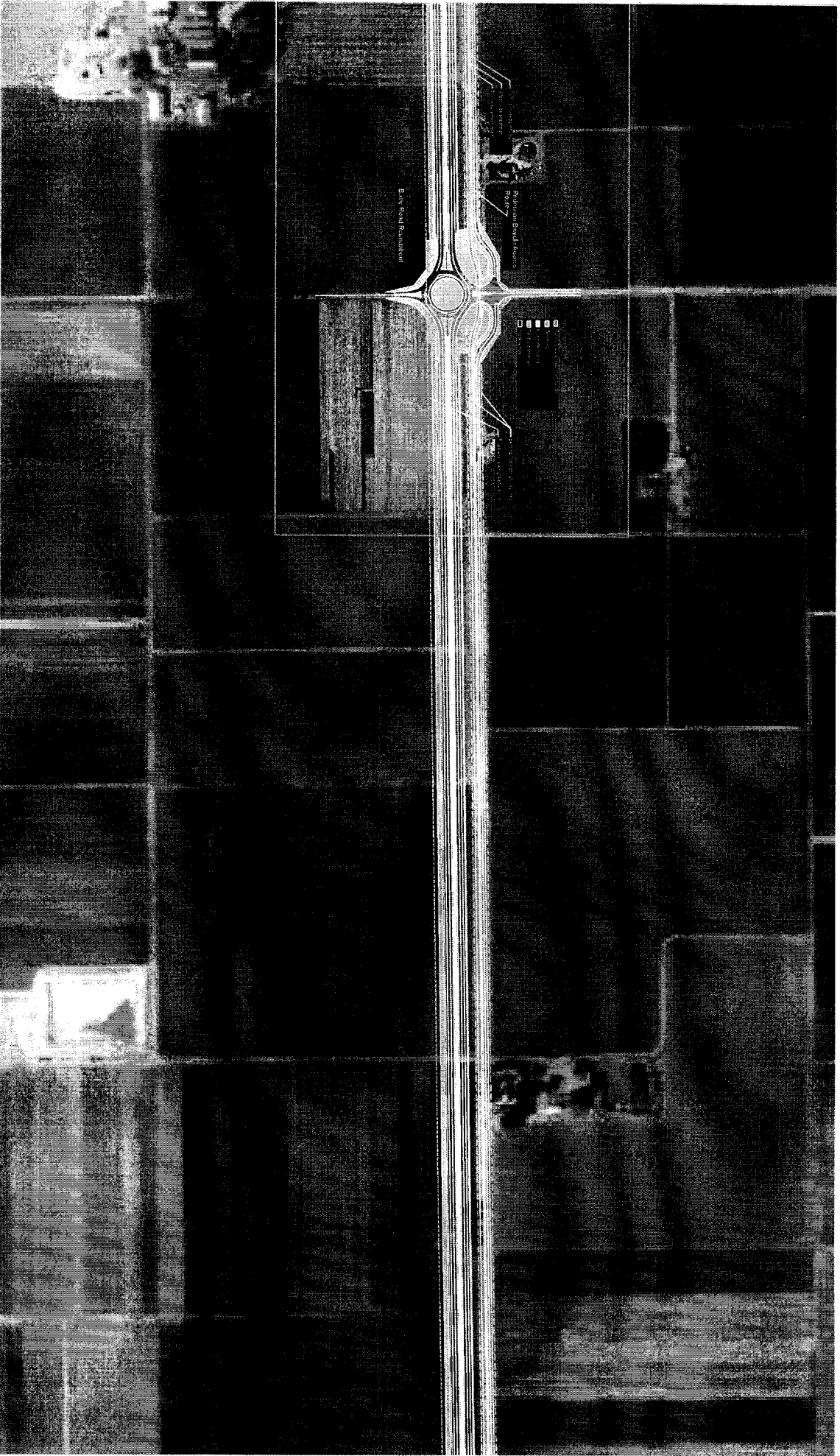
SAN JUAN BAUTISTA IDEA (1)



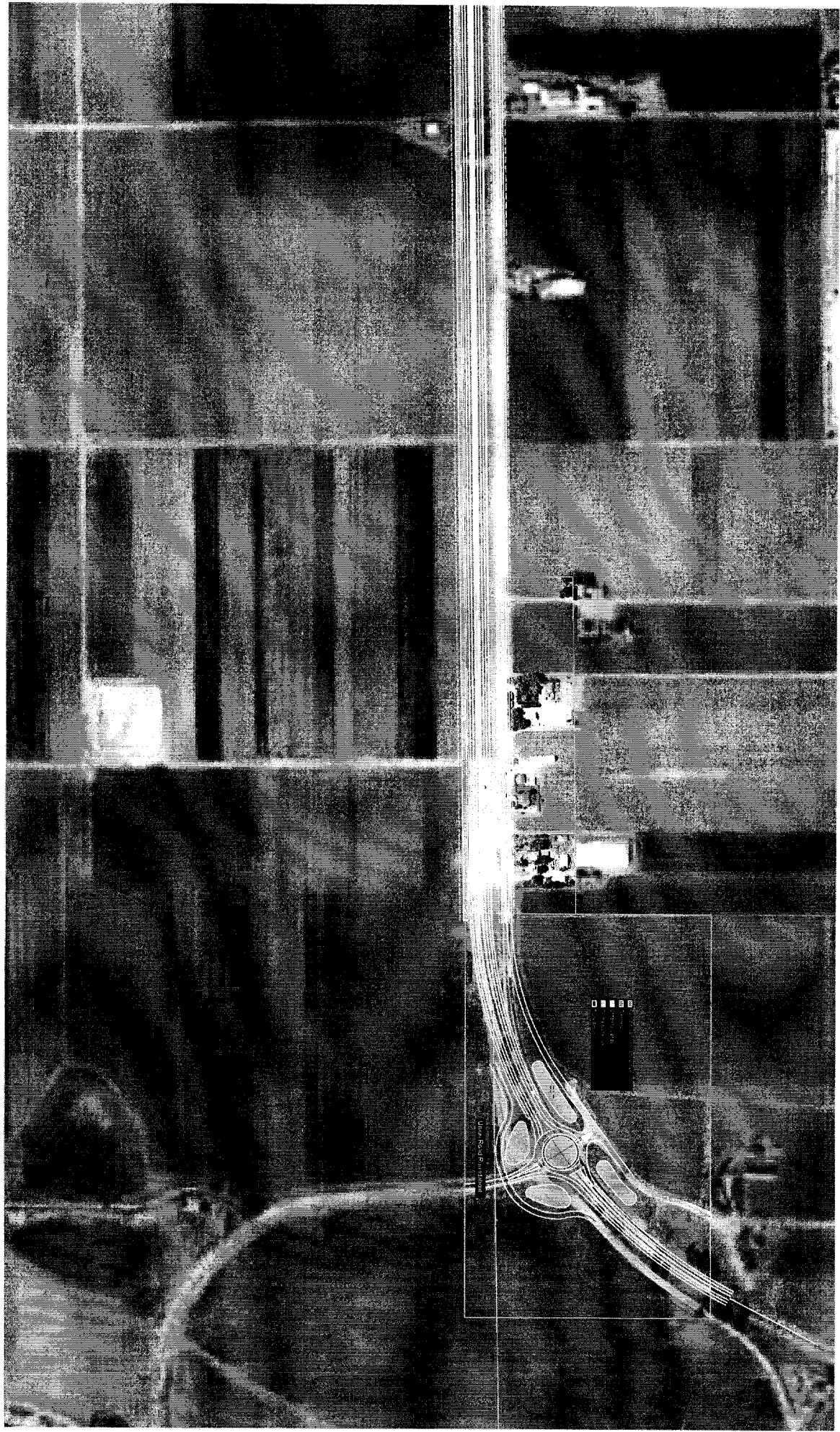
SAN JUAN BAUTISTA (DEA(2))



SAN JUAN BAUTISTA IDEA (3)



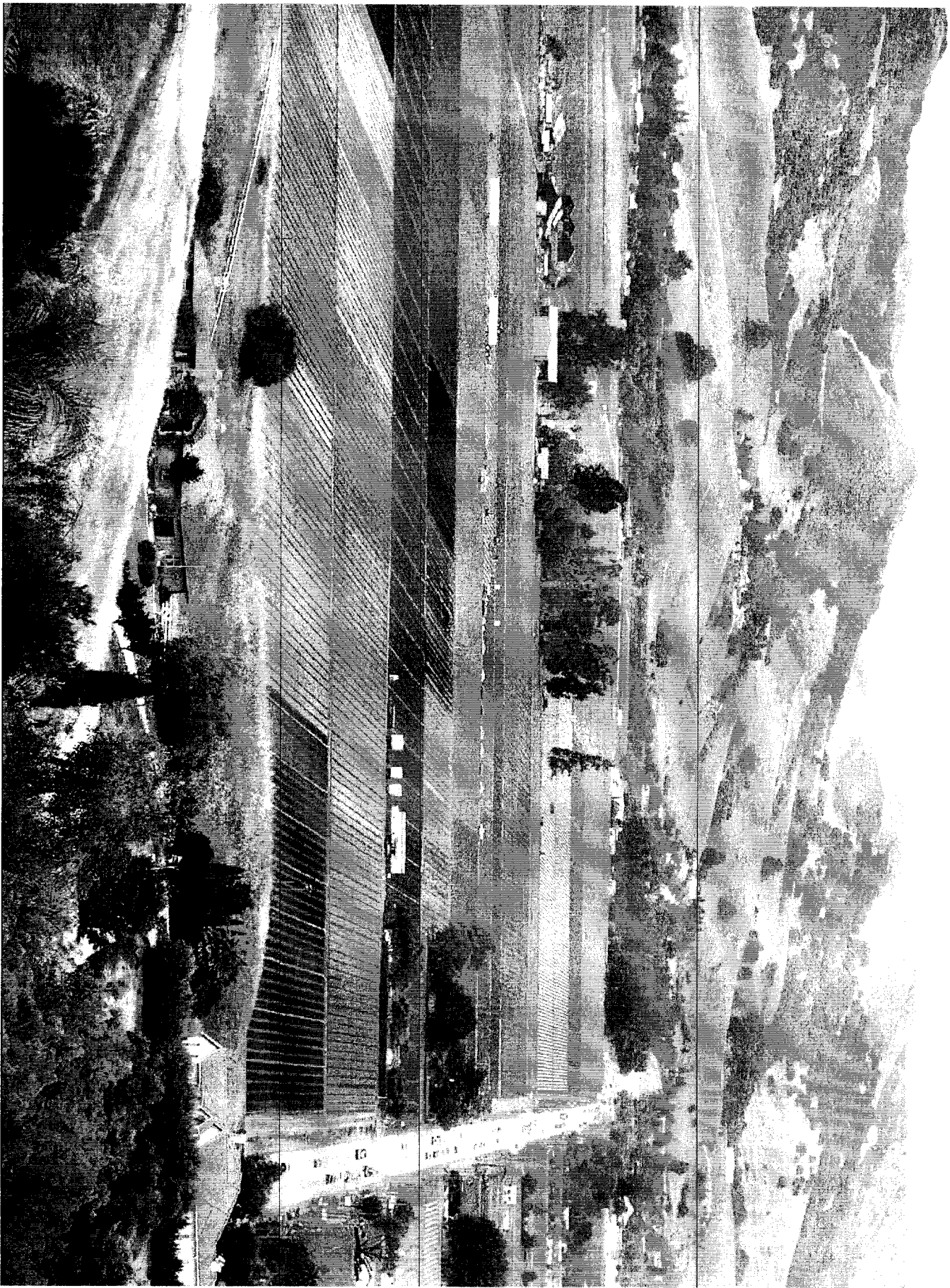
SAN JUAN BAUTISTA IDEA (4)



ROUTE 152 (1985)



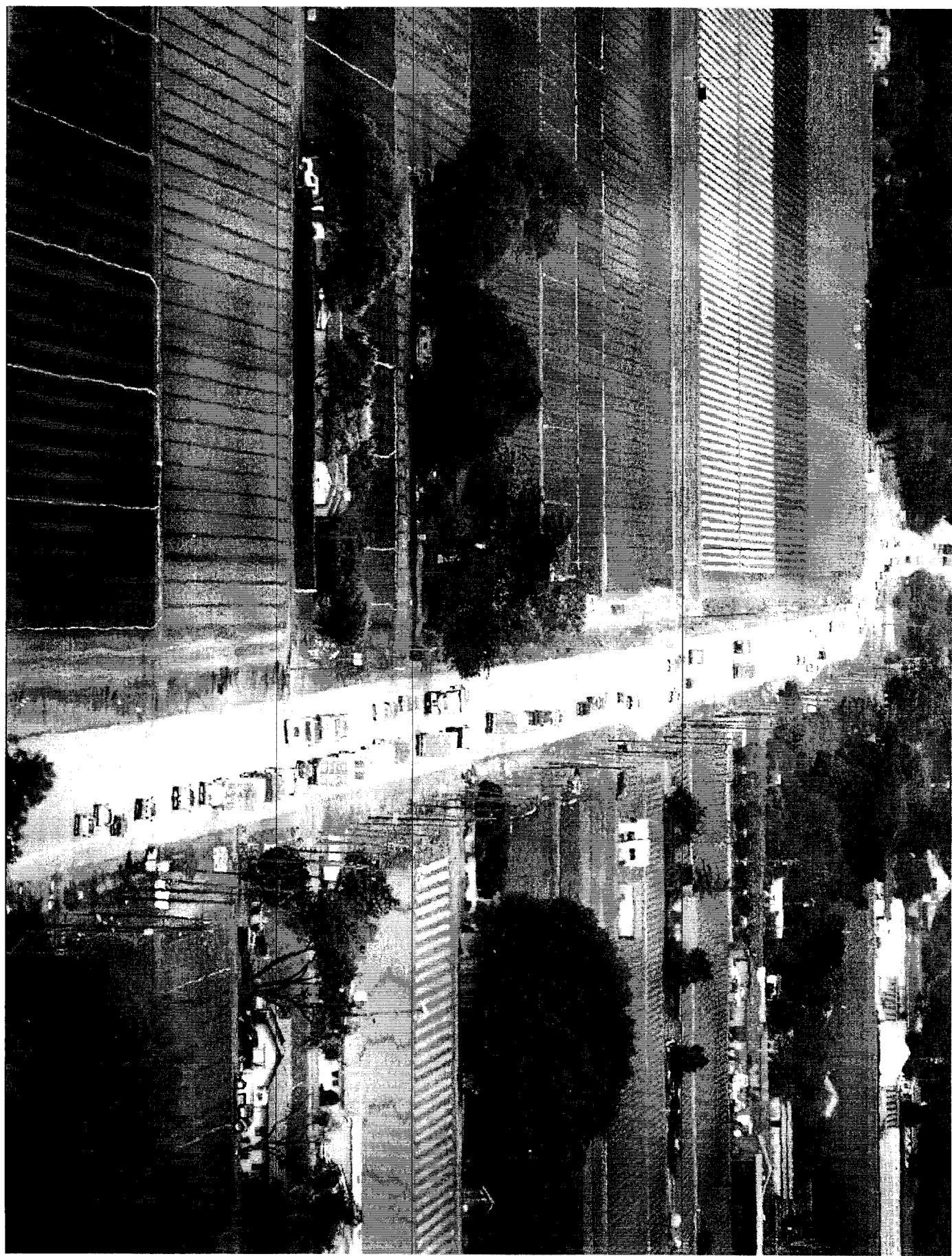
ROUTE 152 (295)

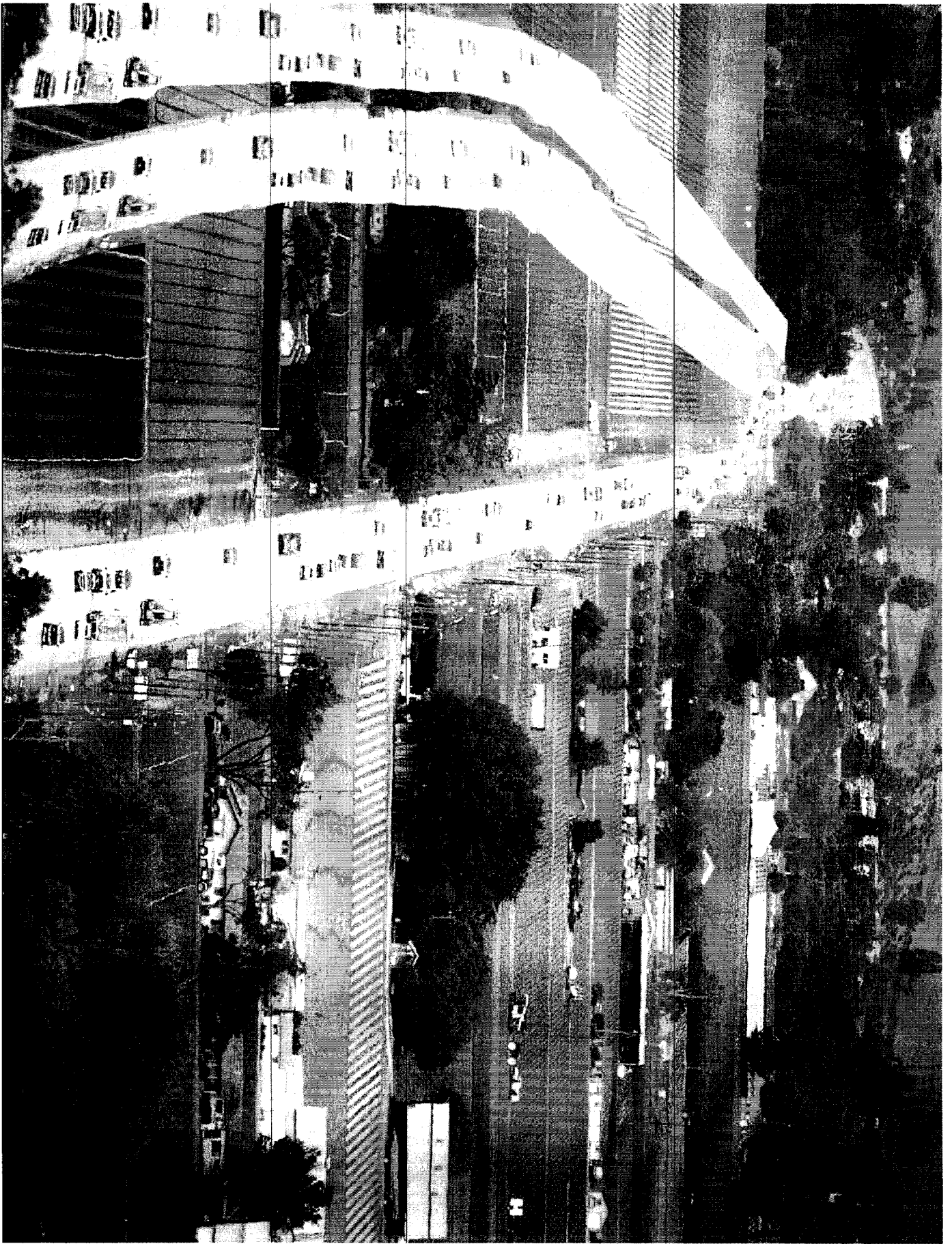


ROUTE 152 (395)



ROUTE 152 (4985)





ROUTE 152 (5985)

SAN JUAN BAUNSTA IDEA MODEL

