SR-33 PAVEMENT PRESERVATION PROJECT

VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

DISTRICT 7 – VEN – 33 (PM 6.3/13.5)

36090/0719000279

Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration / Environmental Assessment

Prepared by the State of California, Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

January 2025

General Information about This Document

What's in this document:
The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA), which examines the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives being considered for the proposed project located in Casitas Springs and Ojai, CA. Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The document tells you why the project is being proposed, what alternatives have been considered for the project, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read this document.

  This document may be downloaded at the following website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7/sr33-pavement-preservation-project.

- We'd like to hear what you think. If you have any comments about the proposed project, please attend the public hearing and/or send your written comments via postal mail or email to Caltrans.

- Send comments via postal mail to:

  Susan Tse Koo
  Senior Environmental Scientist
  100 S. Main St., MS16A
  Los Angeles, CA 90012

- Send comments via email to: GoOakview@dot.ca.gov.

What happens next:
After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, Caltrans, as assigned by the FHWA, may: (1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, (2) do additional environmental studies, or (3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is obtained, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

Alternative Formats:
For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Caltrans, Attn: Susan Tse Koo; (213) 269-1106 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY to Voice), 1 (800) 735-2922 (Voice to TTY), 1 (800) 855-3000 (Spanish TTY to Voice and Voice to TTY), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech) or 711.

07-VEN-33-PM 6.30/13.49
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Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Responsible Agencies: California Transportation Commission

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01/27/2025
Date

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PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes a pavement preservation project to extend the life, serviceability, and ride quality of SR-33. The project also proposes to replace the existing guardrail, terminal system, and improve multi-modal mobility and safety by providing better access for bicycles, pedestrian, and transit users.

Determination

This proposed Negative Declaration (ND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is the Department's intent to adopt an ND for this project. This does not mean that the Department's decision regarding the project is final. This ND is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

The Department has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project would have no effect on Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Recreation, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Utilities and Service Systems.

In addition, the proposed project would have less than significant effects to Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, Public Services, Transportation, and Wildfire.

Kelly Ewing-Toledo

Kelly Ewing-Toledo
Deputy District Director
District 7, Division of Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation

01/27/2025

Date

DRAFT

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

NEPA Assignment

California participated in the "Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program" (Pilot Program) pursuant to 23 USC 327, for more than five years, beginning July 1, 2007, and ending September 30, 2012. MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141), signed by President Obama on July 6, 2012, amended 23 USC 327 to establish a permanent Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. As a result, the Department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to 23 USC 327 (NEPA Assignment MOU) with FHWA. The NEPA Assignment MOU became effective October 1, 2012, and was renewed on May 27, 2022, for a term of ten years. In summary, the Department continues to assume FHWA responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws in the same manner as was assigned under the Pilot Program, with minor changes. With NEPA Assignment, FHWA assigned and the Department assumed all of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA. This assignment includes projects on the State Highway System and Local Assistance Projects off of the State Highway System within the State of California, except for certain categorical exclusions that FHWA assigned to the Department under the 23 USC 326 CE Assignment MOU, projects excluded by definition, and specific project exclusions.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes a pavement preservation project to extend the life, serviceability, and ride quality of State Route 33 (SR-33) from 0.6-miles south of Parkview Drive (postmile (PM) 6.3) to 0.1-miles north of Foothill Trail (postmile 13.49) in Casitas Springs and Ojai within Ventura County. The project also proposes to replace the existing guardrail, terminal system, and improve multi-modal mobility and safety by providing better access for bicycles, pedestrian, and transit users.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for updating the federally required Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). On September 3, 2020, SCAG voted to approve and adopt Connect SoCal (2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy). The Connect SoCal Project List includes projects under Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) ID LALS02 which covers projects under the SHOPP Roadway Preservation Program on various routes in Ventura County. The proposed project was approved under FTIP ID # VEN LALS02 on August 11, 2020, and is consistent with the RTP.

Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map

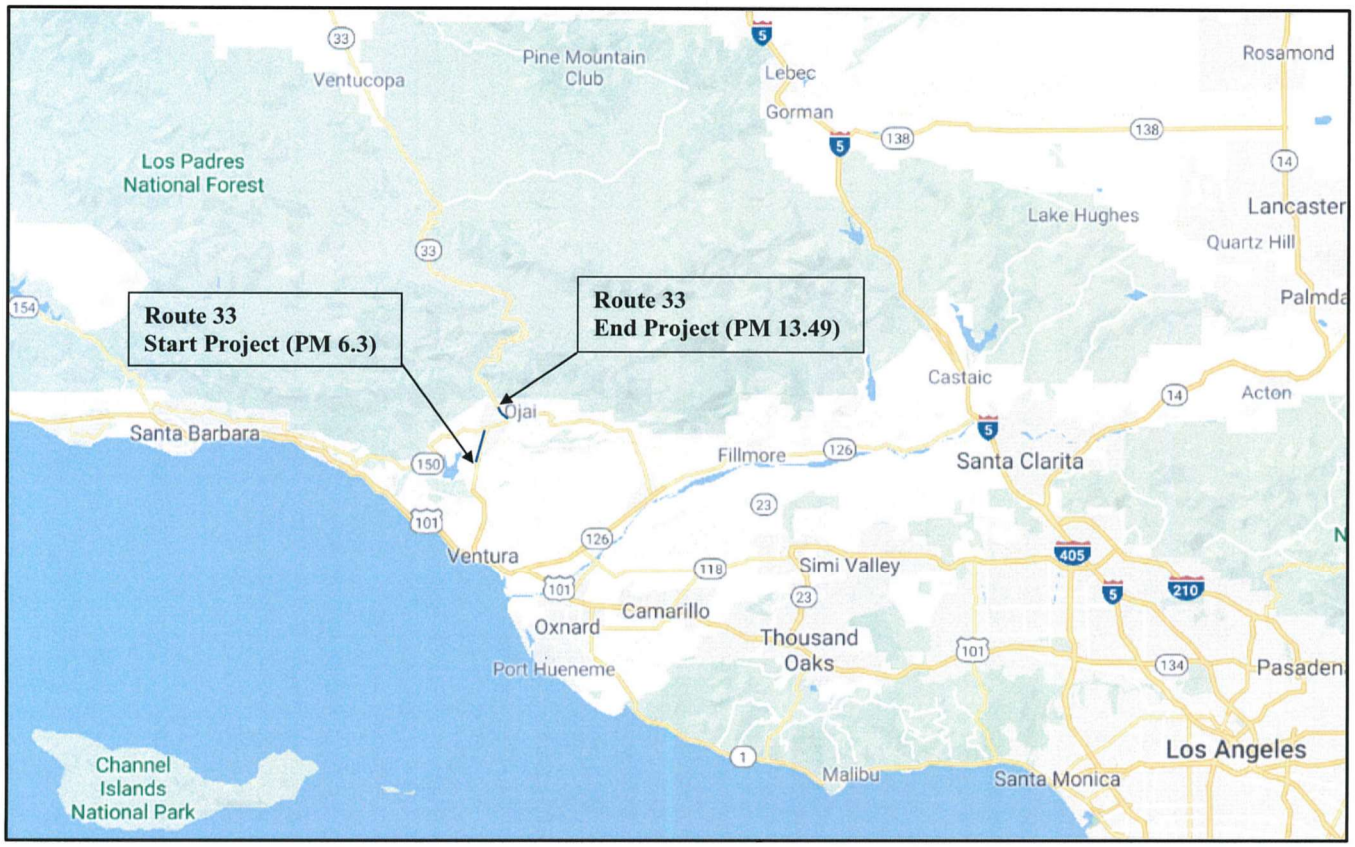
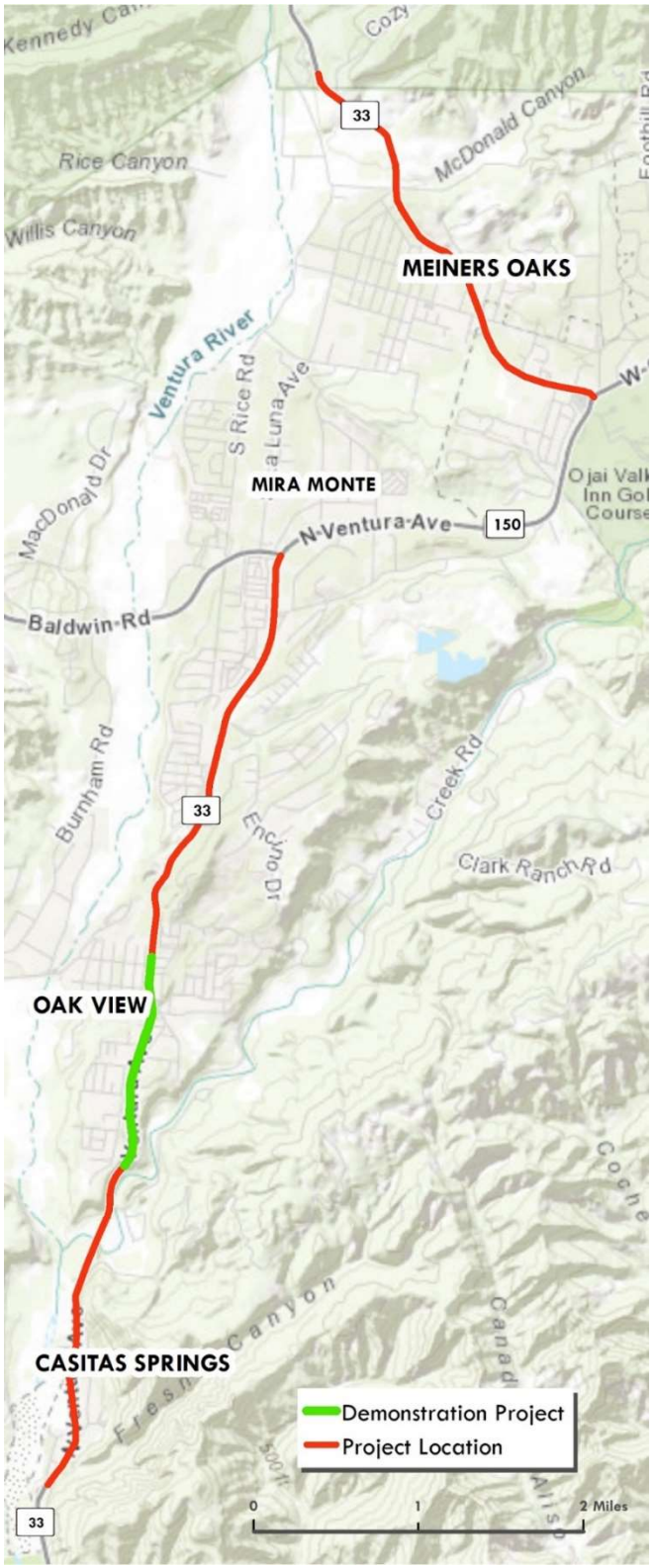


Figure 2: Project Location Map



1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement, improve multi-modal mobility, and improve safety by providing better access for bicycles pedestrian and transit users. The existing pavement requires preservation due to its deteriorated condition; the existing metal beam guardrails are damaged and do not meet current standards, and the sidewalks are not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Lastly, it is necessary to provide a safe highway that meets the mobility needs of cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users.

The project is needed as the existing pavement within the project limits shows signs of distress and deterioration due to heavy and continuous traffic. As indicated in the 2018 Pavement Condition Detailed Report from Pave M, the pavement shows moderate to high percentages of alligator cracking. Furthermore, several of the curb ramps within the project limits are not in compliance with current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards or California Government Code Section 4450 and will need to be upgraded to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

1.3 Independent Utility and Logical Termini

Logical termini for project development are defined as (1) rational endpoints for a transportation improvement, and (2) rational end points for a review of environmental impact. The environmental impact end points frequently cover a broader geographic area than the strict limits of a proposed transportation improvement. Independent utility means that the project improvements have independent significance, or that the improvements are usable at a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements are made in the area.

The proposed project has logical termini because the project limits, on State Route 33 (SR-33) from 0.6-mile South of Parkview Drive to 0.1-mile North of Foothill Trail, would address pavement degradation while improving current multi-modal constraints in Oak View.

The proposed project has independent utility because it does not rely on other projects to address the identified need. Furthermore, the proposed project would not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

1.4 Project Description

This section describes the proposed action and the project alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need of the project, while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. The alternatives are Build Alternative A1, Build Alternative A2, and the No-Build Alternative B.

The California Department of Transportation (the Department) is proposing a multi-asset pavement preservation project in Ventura County on State Route 33 (SR-33) from

0.6-miles south of Parkview Drive (postmile (PM) 6.3) to 0.1-miles north of Foothill Trail (postmile 13.49) in Casitas Springs and Ojai within Ventura County. Refer to Figures 1 and 2 for the project vicinity and location. Other upgrades to guardrails, curb ramps, and other pedestrian infrastructure would be made. The project will require minor roadside clearing and tree trimming.

1.5 Project Alternatives

There are three alternatives under consideration. Build Alternative A1- Pavement Preservation and Upgrade, Build Alternative A2 – Lane Reduction Road Diet, and the No-Build Alternative. After the public circulation period, all comments will be considered and Caltrans will select a preferred alternative and make the final determination of the project's effect on the environment. Under CEQA, if no unmitigable significant adverse impacts are identified, Caltrans will prepare a Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated ND. Similarly, if a determination is made that the proposed action does not significantly impact the environment, Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in accordance with NEPA.

This project contains a number of standardized project measures which are employed on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are addressed in more detail in the Environmental Consequences sections found in Chapter 2.

1.5.1 Build Alternatives

<u>Build Alternative A1 – Pavement Preservation and Upgrade</u>

The proposal for Build Alternative A1 is to cold plane 0.15 foot Asphalt Concrete (AC) pavement and overlay of existing pavement AC with 0.15 foot Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt Type G (RHMA-G). 3,100 feet of existing Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) and end treatments will be upgraded to the current standard Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) and terminals. The alternative will upgrade forty-one (41) existing curb ramps to comply with current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, install pavement delineations, replace all non-standard markers with current standards, and construct 1,700 new linear feet of sidewalk. It will also upgrade the Traffic Management System (TMS), upgrade one (1) and install two (2) traffic census stations, construct four (4) new bus pads and shelters, upgrade the traffic signals at four (4) intersections, and upgrade all crosswalks to Continental Crosswalks. Five (5) new crosswalks will be built with three (3) Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB) and two (2) Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) signals.

<u>Build Alternative A2 – Lane Reduction Road Diet</u>

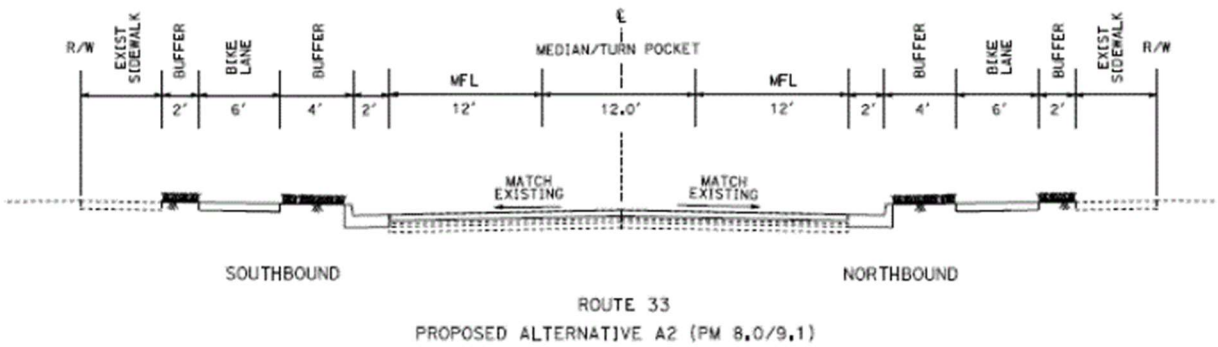
In addition to all work listed in Build Alternative A1, Build Alternative A2 would also reconfigure current lane striping from five lanes to three lanes (one through lane in each

direction divided by a two-way left-turn lane), with a bike lane at both sides of the road, from Santa Ana Boulevard to Larmier Avenue (between Postmile (PM) 8.45 to PM 9.12). This alternative will also provide landscaping and curb extensions within these limits.

Bike Lane Design Options

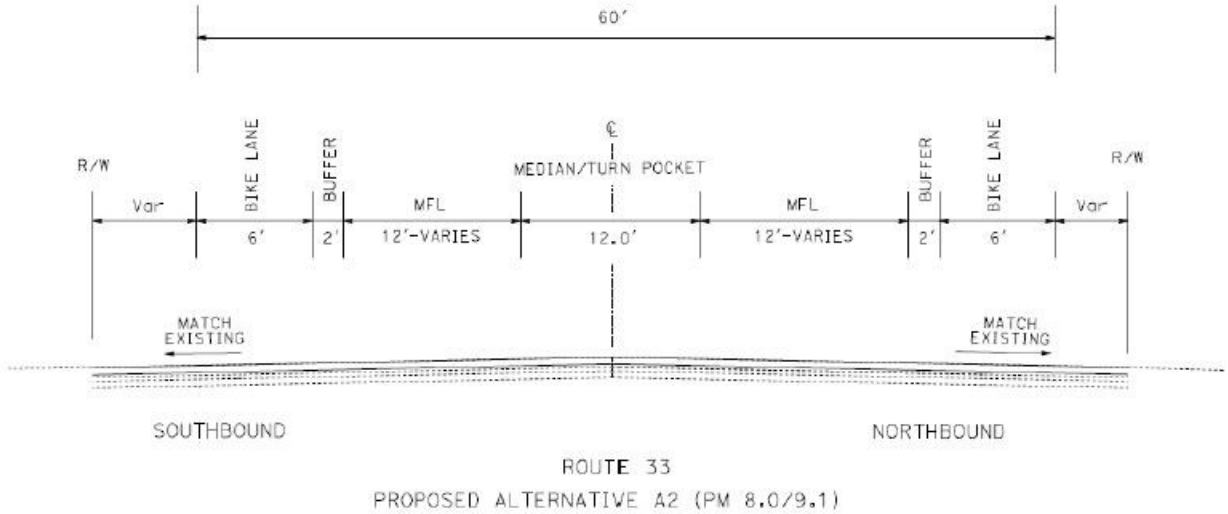
The design options shown in Figure 3 (physical separation between travel lanes; Class IV Bike Lane) and Figure 4 (painted buffer separation between travel lanes and cycle lanes; Class II Bike Lane) are both associated with Build Alternative A2. Both design options are being considered and will be further evaluated in the project Design phase.

Figure 3: Option 1 - Potential Cross Section for SR-33 Through Oak View



Source: TOAR 2024

Figure 4: Option 2 - Potential Cross Section for SR-33 Through Oak View



Source: TOAR 2024

1.5.2 No-Build Alternative

No-Build Alternative B

The No-Build Alternative would have no changes made to the existing facility. No action would be taken to improve the existing road condition and the road quality would continue to deteriorate.

1.6 Demonstration Project

In Winter 2024, a demonstration project was implemented in Oak View from Larmier Avenue to La Cross Street, for a total distance of just over half a mile. The demonstration project involved restriping SR-33, implementing Class II bike lanes and a buffer zone in each direction, as shown in Figure 5. The purpose of the demonstration project was to determine appropriate usage for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as determine how the project will impact local businesses. Data collected from the demonstration project was used to inform the Traffic Analysis Report completed in November 2024.

Figure 5: Demonstration Project Lane Reduction Along SR-33

1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications (PLACs) are required for project construction:

Table 1: Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
California Transportation Commission (CTC)	CTC vote to approve funds	Following approval of the Final Environmental Document, the CTC will be required to vote to approve funding for the project.

Chapter 2 Project Impacts

2.1 Resource Topics Dismissed from Analysis in Environmental Assessment

As part of the scoping and environmental analysis carried out for the project, the following environmental issues were considered but no adverse impacts were identified. As a result, there is no further discussion about these issues in this document.

Table 2: Resource Topics Dismissed from Analysis

Resource	Rationale for Dismissal (Build Alternatives A1 & A2)
Existing and Future Land Use	The project will not physically divide an established community or cause a significant impact due to conflicting with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs	Build Alternative A2 is consistent with the California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2040, which would improve multimodal mobility and accessibility, the Ventura Countywide Bicycle Master Plan by expanding and optimizing the project area's bicycle facilities, and the Ventura County Active Transportation Plan implementing pedestrian and bicyclist facilities within the County's unincorporated communities. Build Alternative A1 would involve no changes to the number of lanes of SR-33 in the project area.
Coastal Zone	There will be no effects to coastal resources as the project area is not within the coastal zone.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	The proposed project will have no effect on wild and scenic rivers because the project is not located within any wild and scenic river.
Parks and Recreational Facilities	The project will have no impact on any parks or recreational facilities.
Farmlands/Timberlands	There will be no effect on farmland and timberland resources because the project is not located within farmland and timberland.
Growth	The proposed project is not anticipated to induce growth in the project area. The proposed project does not involve creating new access, housing, or capacity of other services.

Resource	Rationale for Dismissal (Build Alternatives A1 & A2)
Community Character and Cohesion	A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) memorandum was prepared for the proposed project. The CIA found that the proposed project would not impact population and housing, economic conditions, community facilities, environmental justice, or equity.
Relocations and Real Property Acquisition	The proposed project does not relocate and/or displace residential or non-residential (commercial, industrial, and manufacturing businesses or agricultural or farmland) land. Two (2) small highway easements are proposed at APN 034-0-105-065 (~7.93 square feet) and APN 017-0-210-480 (~7.61 square feet) to allow space for the sidewalk to meet Caltrans design and ADA standards. Neither of these easements involve property acquisition or relocation. Additional discussion is included in Section 2.3.1.
Environmental Justice	No minority or low-income populations adversely affected by the proposed project have been identified, as determined above. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12898.
Visual/Aesthetics	The proposed project will improve the visual and aesthetic resources within the project area by repaving distressed and deteriorated pavement, installing new sidewalks and crosswalks, landscaping, as well as constructing new bus pads and shelters.
Cultural Resources	Per the Archeological Survey Report & Historic Property Survey Report (June 2023) the proposed project was determined to have a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1) under Stipulation IX.A of the Section 106 PA.
Hydrology and Floodplain	The project is located within Base Flood Elevation (Zone AE) of the Ventura River Floodplain and the San Antonio Creek Floodplain. Zone AE is defined as floodplain areas that have a 1-percent-annual-chance (or “100-year”) flood and have been provided a specific depth of flooding by FEMA. There would be no risks associated with the project since the project would not result in a significant encroachment in the 100-year floodplain.

Resource	Rationale for Dismissal (Build Alternatives A1 & A2)
	It has been noted by residents that some areas of the SR-33 roadway experience flooding during heavy rain events. These locations will be further evaluated in the Design phase and will be addressed if necessary. If these locations are outside of Caltrans right-of-way, the County of Ventura shall be notified of the problem areas.
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff	According to the Stormwater Data Report – Short Form (December 2019), the project does not result in an increase of one acre or more of new impervious surface, therefore, the proposed project is not required to implement permanent Treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs). The proposed project will have little to no impact to water quality or storm runoff within the project limits.
Geology / Soils / Seismic / Topography	The project will not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, cause substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, or is 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.
Paleontology	A majority of the proposed project lies on alluvial deposits, which are assigned a low paleontological sensitivity. SR-33 has also been subjected to extensive disturbance from previous construction and maintenance, as well as development within the communities of Casitas Springs and Oak View. Therefore, impacts to Paleontological Resources are not anticipated.
Hazardous Waste / Materials	Construction related activities involve hazardous waste issues common to highway construction projects but will be minimized through Caltrans Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices. Hazardous Waste materials of concern include the following: aerially deposited lead (ADL), potential petroleum hydrocarbons, electrical waste, treated wood waste, and yellow striping waste.
Air Quality	An air quality technical memorandum was completed in June 2023 analyzing project-

Resource	Rationale for Dismissal (Build Alternatives A1 & A2)
	level CO, PM10, PM2.5, and other pollutants. The study found that the project will not cause or contribute to a new violation of the CO, $PM_{2.5}$, or PM_{10} standards.
Noise	This is not a Type I project as defined in the 2020 Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol and is not expected to raise traffic noise levels or cause a substantial noise increase. Potential noise impacts related to short-term construction activities will be minimized through Caltrans Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices.
Energy	The proposed project does not add roadway capacity and is unlikely to increase direct energy consumption through increased fuel usage. While construction would result in a short-term increase in energy use, construction-related energy consumption would be temporary and not a permanent new source of energy demand.
Natural Communities	The oak woodlands are a natural community resource that is within and adjacent to the project impact area. However, the root zones are outside of the project impact area and will not be adversely affected. Replacement of guardrail would require trimming of oak tree canopy, but this impact would be minimized through incorporation of standard avoidance and minimization measures.
Wetlands and Other Waters	There are no wetlands and waters as defined by the Clean Water Act within the project area. Therefore, no impacts to wetlands and waters are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.
Plant Species	The project area is not a suitable habitat for special status plant species. Therefore, no adverse impacts are anticipated to special status plant species.
Animal Species	The project impact area does not provide suitable habitat for special status animal species. Therefore, no special status animal species will be adversely impacted.
Threatened and Endangered Species	There are no identified threatened and endangered species within the project impact area. Therefore, there will be no impacts to threatened and endangered species.

Resource	Rationale for Dismissal (Build Alternatives A1 & A2)
	This project is located outside of NOAA Fisheries Service jurisdiction; therefore, a NOAA species list is not required and no effects to NOAA species are anticipated.
Invasive Species	The project will not promote or inhibit the spread of native species. Invasive species will not be used in any landscaping for the project.
Section 4(f)	There are no historic sites, or wildlife or waterfowl refuges, which meet the definition of a Section 4(f) resource within the project vicinity. Several parks and recreational facilities are located within the project vicinity, however, there is no associated "use" of these facilities, and they will not be impacted. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. (Caltrans Memo 2021).

2.2 Resource Topics Warranting Further Analysis

2.2.1 Utilities and Emergency Services

Affected Environment

The following section is based on the Right-of-Way Datasheet, completed by the Caltrans Division of Right-of-Way (October 2024), and the Traffic Operations Analysis Report (TOAR) (November 2024).

Utilities

The project area is serviced by the following utility providers:

- Ventura County Public Works
- Casitas Municipal Water District
- EJ Harrison (Trash)
- Clean Power Alliance
- SoCalGas
- Southern California Edison

- AT&T
- Verizon
- Spectrum
- Frontier Internet

Emergency Services

The project area is serviced by the following emergency services:

- Ventura County Fire Department
- Ventura County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency
- American Medical Response (AMR) Ventura County
- Ventura County Sheriff - Office of Emergency Services (OES)
- CalFire
- California Highway Patrol

Environmental Consequences

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, emergency services and public utilities will not be affected.

Build Alternative A1

Under Build Alternative A1, the existing four-lane configuration of SR-33 will remain, and no public utilities or emergency services will be affected. Emergency service response times are anticipated to remain at the same level of service as existing conditions.

Build Alternative A2

Under Build Alternative A2, no public utilities are anticipated to be relocated, therefore no impact is anticipated following project construction.

Certain geometric configurations of the lane reduction, as well as driver behavior may affect emergency response following project completion.

Traffic Analysis – Emergency Response Meeting

In addition to the comprehensive traffic operations analysis of the pre and post demonstration project conditions, a meeting was held with several emergency responders within the study area on June 17, 2024, to gain an understanding of any potential impacts that may be associated with the geometric changes associated with the demonstration project and the proposed project. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Ventura County Fire Department, Ventura County Emergency Medical Services, American Medical Response (AMR) Ambulance, and Caltrans. A summary of the meeting can be found in Chapter 4 – Comments and Coordination.

Bike Lane Design Options

The design options shown in Figure 3 (physical separation between travel lanes; Class IV Bike Lane) and Figure 4 (painted buffer separation between travel lanes and cycle lanes; Class II Bike Lane) are both associated with the permanent complete streets approach. Emergency vehicles will be able to pass other vehicles in the travel lanes by using the two-way left turn lane in the center of the highway. However, with Option 1, motorists will be unable to pull over to the right with the raised curb, and to get out of the way of emergency vehicles, some motorists may pull over to the left into the median/two-way left turn lane. As such, emergency vehicles in this case would remain in the travel lane.

Conversely, if the above operations are deemed insufficient for the emergency responders given the concerns raised, Caltrans may consider cross section Option 2, where a painted buffer strip (without curbs) will allow motorists to move over to the right to allow emergency vehicles to pass – as required, and if the maneuver is safe noting that cyclists may be present in the bike lane.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Minimization U-1: Caltrans shall continue to evaluate design options and coordinate with emergency service providers throughout the project Design phase to ensure certain geometric features of the project do not impact emergency response times or increase hazards.

2.2.2 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Regulatory Setting

The Department, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), directs that full consideration should be given to the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists during the development of Federal-aid highway projects (see 23 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 652). It further directs that the special needs of the elderly and the disabled must be considered in all Federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. When current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic presents a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort must be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the facility.

In July 1999, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued an Accessibility Policy Statement pledging a fully accessible multimodal transportation system. Accessibility in federally assisted programs is governed by the USDOT regulations (49 CFR 27) implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 United States Code [USC] 794). The FHWA has enacted regulations for the implementation of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including a commitment to build transportation facilities that provide equal access for all persons. These regulations require application of the ADA requirements to federal-aid projects, including Transportation Enhancement Activities.

Affected Environment

The following information is based on the Ojai Valley Highway 33 Multimodal and Community Enhancement Study (March 2020), the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum (July 2023), and the Traffic Operations Analysis Report (TOAR) (November 2024).

State Route 33

SR-33 is a primary corridor connecting the coastal City of Ventura to the City of Ojai, located in the foothills of the Los Padres National Forest. SR-33 carries approximately 21,000 vehicles per day and is a significant roadway for the entire region. Between Ventura and Ojai, the Ventura County unincorporated communities of Casitas Springs, Oak View, and Mira Monte are nestled along SR-33. This highway is a winding two-lane road stretching 15 miles from Ventura to Ojai and rising approximately 750 feet in elevation. The highway shoulders are paved for emergency use, but family communities are nestled closely adjacent to the roadside. As a result, the Highway shoulders have become part of the de facto pedestrian network. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users in the Ojai Valley use the highway shoulders as their walkways due to limited alternatives. Therefore, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are in a vulnerable position where their safety is compromised. During darker hours of the day, the lack of street lighting along the highway elevates the potential risk for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

In the vicinity of the proposed project, SR-33 is an undivided roadway with occasional two-way left-turn lanes, with a speed limit varying between 35 miles per hour (mph) and 45 mph. From approximately 345 feet north of Portal Street to 50 feet south of La Cross Street, SR-33 consists of a four-lane facility with two lanes in each direction of travel. SR-33 north of Creek Road is also a four-lane facility with two lanes in each direction of travel.

SR-33 primary traffic concerns relate to capacity, speed, flow, and parking. Vehicle volumes on SR-33 are above comfort levels for the residents of Ojai Valley. Corridor use as a thoroughfare to access Ojai and Ventura results in the degradation of the small-town rural aesthetics and community values. A range of vehicles with differing speeds share SR-33. Tractors and hay trucks on occasion share the Highway and

create disturbance in flow. Left turns onto SR-33 become difficult during peak traffic hours and may lead to congestion on nearby streets.

Bicycle Facilities

The Ojai Valley Trail (Trail) is the primary backbone of the bicycle transportation network for the Ojai Valley area. The nine-mile Trail services many recreational uses and serves as a tremendous regional connector, connecting to the City of Ventura at its southern terminus, where significant employment opportunities exist. While the Trail provides recreational and regional benefits for longer-distance trips, the Trail is inadequate for short-distance, local, and non-recreational trips. Residences north of Oak View Avenue and west of SR-33 do not have easy access to the trail due to the highway as a barrier.

Pedestrian Facilities

Most intersections in the study corridor lack pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, painted crosswalks, streetlights, or ADA compliant ramps—creating a less inviting pedestrian-friendly environment. The roadway design of SR-33 shows a strong preference for vehicular use, especially at intersections, where turning radii are large to allow vehicle turns at faster speeds.

Transit Facilities

The Ojai Valley is serviced by two transit providers. Bus stop infrastructure in the Ojai Valley is below ADA standards. The main concerns about bus stop amenities relate to the lack of shelter from the elements, comfortable seating, lighting, and lack of pedestrian infrastructure. Limited safe pedestrian crossings on SR-33 are a significant barrier as passengers must cross the highway on at least one leg of the trip. Existing conditions place transit users at risk of conflict with vehicles by placing individuals in the roadway's vehicle use areas.

Safety

Safety is a main community concern. A majority of collisions in the area occur because of unsafe speeds. A three-year sample of Caltrans data shows unsafe speeds in 57% of collision reports. Wide lanes, passing lanes, and long stretches of roadway without crossings all contribute to the incidence of vehicles driving at unsafe speeds. This safety analysis used the most recent three years of collisions data (2015-2017) available from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). The dataset includes all reported collisions. During the three-year span, a total of four pedestrian-to-vehicle, three bicycle-to-vehicle, and 70 vehicle-to-vehicle collisions were reported, all of which resulted in varying levels of injury.

Environmental Consequences

Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure that characterizes the operational conditions of an intersection's traffic flow, ranging from LOS A (indicating traffic conditions with little to no delay) to LOS F (representing significant and over-saturated delays). This measure is derived from the average delay per vehicle for each movement at a study intersection, measured in seconds per vehicle. The "industry standard" level of service grading system is shown in Table 3. LOS E or LOS F is generally deemed deficient.

Table 3: Level of Service Grading System

LOS	Control Delay (Seconds/Vehicle)	Control Delay (Seconds/Vehicle)	Description
	Signalized Intersection	**Unsignalized Intersection**	
A	<10	<10	Free flow
B	>10 and <20	>10 and <15	Stable flow (some delays)
C	>20 and <35	>15 and <25	Stable flow (greater delays)
D	>35 and <55	>25 and <35	Approaching unstable flow
E	>55 and <80	>35 and <50	Unstable flow
F	>80	>50	Jammed

Source: TOAR 2024

Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio

Volume to Capacity (v/c) ratio is an output from the analysis tools (Synchro). Lower v/c ratios indicate low traffic density and imply that surplus green time is available on every signal cycle. Conversely, higher v/c ratios indicate high traffic density, restrictive movement, and limited or no surplus capacity. When v/c ratios fall between 0.90 and 1.00, there is little capacity available to accommodate day-to-day traffic fluctuations, and variations due to traffic composition, weather and construction, or unplanned incidents. Traffic volumes in excess of capacity imply that queues will form and expand until the approach flow rate falls below the processing capacity.

95th Percentile Queue Length

The 95th percentile queue length is an output from the analysis tools (SimTraffic), reported in feet for each lane group. The 95th percentile threshold represents the length that 95 out of 100 queue length observations would be at or below this length. Queue lengths are considered detrimental to the overall road network/system when these queues extend into upstream intersections, or block through lanes, thereby limiting overall throughput at the subject intersection and potentially those upstream.

Pre-Demonstration Project Conditions (January 2024)

Level of Service (LOS)

On the intersection approach level, some unsignalized approaches were found to operate at an unacceptable level of service and is summarized as follows:

- Westbound left at E Old Creek Road operates at LOS F in the afternoon peak hour.
- Westbound left at Creek Road operates at LOS F in the morning and afternoon peak hours.
- Westbound approach at Portal Street operates at LOS F in the morning and afternoon peak hours.
- Eastbound and westbound approaches at Park Ave operate at LOS E in the morning and afternoon peak hours.
- Eastbound and westbound approaches at Short Street operate at LOS F and E in the morning and afternoon peak hours, respectively.

All other unsignalized approaches operate at LOS D or better in the morning and afternoon peak hours. All signalized approaches operate at LOS C or better in the morning and afternoon peak hours.

On the overall intersection level, Creek Road at SR-33 is the only intersection operating at LOS F in the afternoon peak hour. All other unsignalized and all signalized intersections operate at LOS A or LOS B in the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio

The westbound left-turn movement at the intersection of Creek Road and SR-33 has a v/c ratio of 1.27 and 2.34 in the morning and afternoon peak hours respectively. V/c ratios for other movements are well below 0.90.

95th Percentile Queue Length

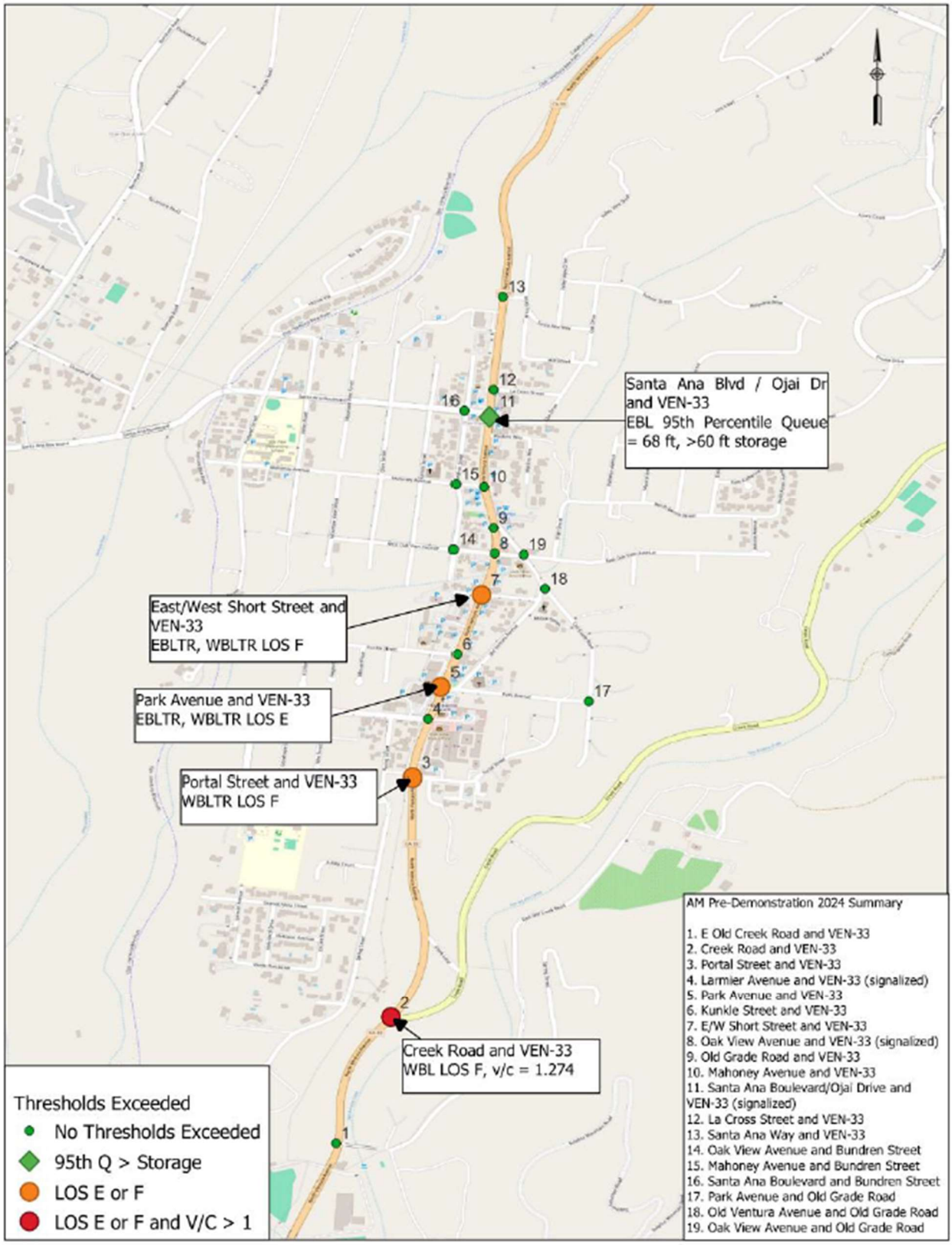
Some movements have queues longer than the storage lengths, and these locations are summarized below:

- Westbound right at the intersection of E Old Creek Road and SR-33 has an estimated queue length of approximately 21 feet which exceeds the 20 feet of available storage length in the afternoon peak hour.
- Westbound right at the intersection of Creek Road and SR-33 has an estimated queue length of approximately 49 feet which exceeds the 30 feet of available storage length in the afternoon peak hour.

- Eastbound left at the intersection of Santa Ana Blvd/Ojai Dr and SR-33 has an estimated queue length of approximately 68 and 78 feet which exceeds the 60 feet of available storage length in the morning and afternoon peak hour respectively.

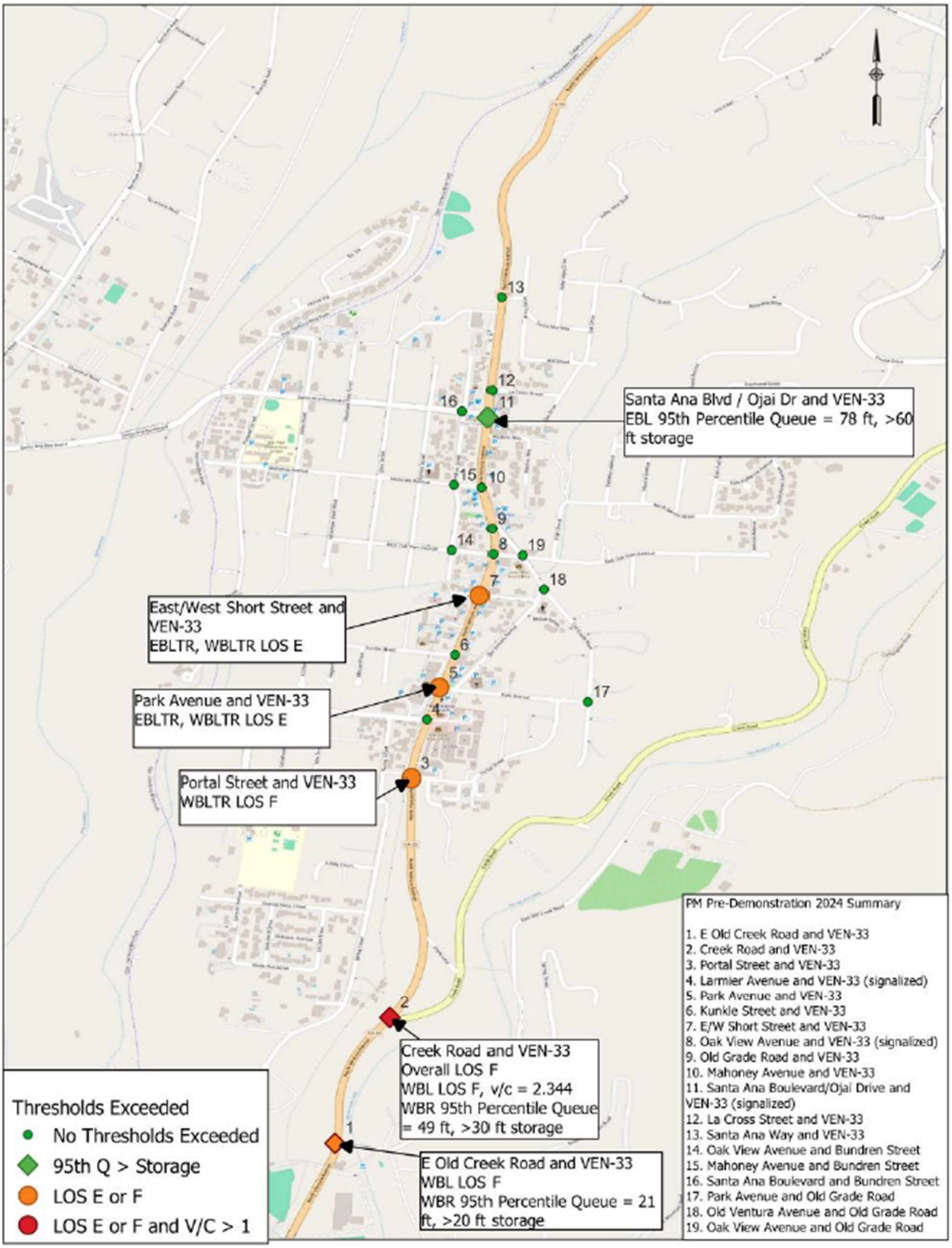
The above issues are graphically shown on Figures 6 and 7 for the AM and PM peak hours respectively.

Figure 6: AM Peak Hour Pre-Demonstration 2024 Summary of Issues



Source: TOAR 2024

Figure 7: PM Peak Hour Pre-Demonstration 2024 Summary of Issues



Source: TOAR 2024

In the pre-demonstration 2024 scenario, intersection turning movements that did not meet the acceptable thresholds were limited to the eastbound and westbound movements from the minor streets turning onto VEN-33. The westbound left turn movement from Creek Road to VEN-33 is particularly challenging, with a LOS F for both the AM and PM peak hours. However, this issue is partly mitigated by the receiving lane downstream on the south approach, which later merges with the main southbound traffic. Generally, these turning movements from the minor streets have low volumes and the traffic operations issues are a result of the delays associated with finding a gap in the mainline northbound or southbound traffic.

Post-Demonstration Project Conditions (April 2024)

The demonstration project reduced the number of through lanes from two lanes to one lane in each direction along SR-33, from Larmier Ave to La Cross St, to allow for a bicycle lane to run parallel and separated with a buffer from general vehicle traffic.

The locations where traffic operations are exceeding acceptable thresholds are summarized below.

Level of Service (LOS)

- E Old Creek Road
    - Westbound left operates at LOS F in the PM peak hour similar to pre-demonstration project conditions.
- Creek Road
    - Overall LOS F in the PM peak hour.
    - Westbound left operates at LOS F for both AM and PM peak hours similar to pre-demonstration project conditions.
- Portal Street
    - Westbound operates at LOS F for both AM and PM peak hours similar to pre-demonstration project conditions.
- Park Avenue
    - Eastbound operates at LOS F for both AM and PM peak hours.
    - Westbound operates at LOS F and E for AM and PM respectively similar to pre-demonstration project conditions.
- Kunkle Street

    - Eastbound operates at LOS E for both AM and PM peak hours. This exceeds acceptable thresholds that were previously within acceptable thresholds in the pre-demonstration project scenario.

- Short Street
    - Eastbound operates at LOS F for both AM and PM peak hours similar to pre-demonstration project conditions.

- Old Grade Road
    - Eastbound operates at LOS F for the PM peak hour.

Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio

- Creek Road
    - Westbound left v/c ratio exceeds 1.0 for both the AM and PM.

95th Percentile Queue Length

- E Old Creek Road
    - Westbound right 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 33 feet in the PM peak hour, exceeding the available storage length of 20 feet.

- Larmier Avenue
    - Southbound right 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 117 and 61 feet in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, exceeding the available storage length of 50 feet.

- Oak View Avenue
    - Northbound right 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 57 and 97 feet in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, exceeding the available storage length of 50 feet.

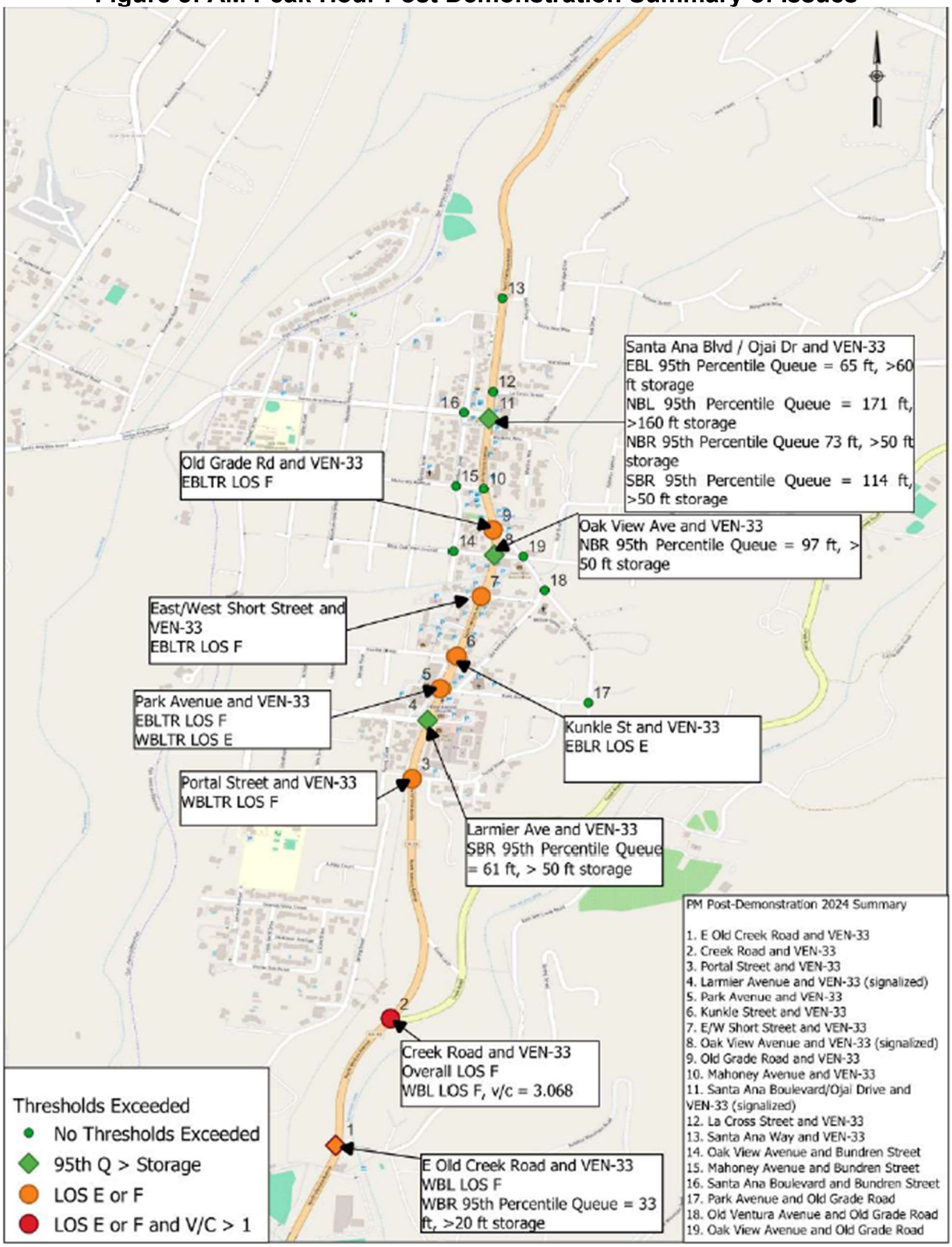
- Santa Ana Boulevard/Ojai Drive
    - Eastbound left 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 81 and 65 feet in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, exceeding the available storage length of 60 feet.
    - Northbound left 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 179 and 171 feet in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, exceeding the available storage of 160 feet.

- Northbound right 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 73 feet in the PM peak hour, exceeding the available storage length of 50 feet.

- Southbound right 95th percentile queue is estimated to be approximately 79 and 114 feet in the AM and PM peak hours respectively, exceeding the available storage length of 50 feet.

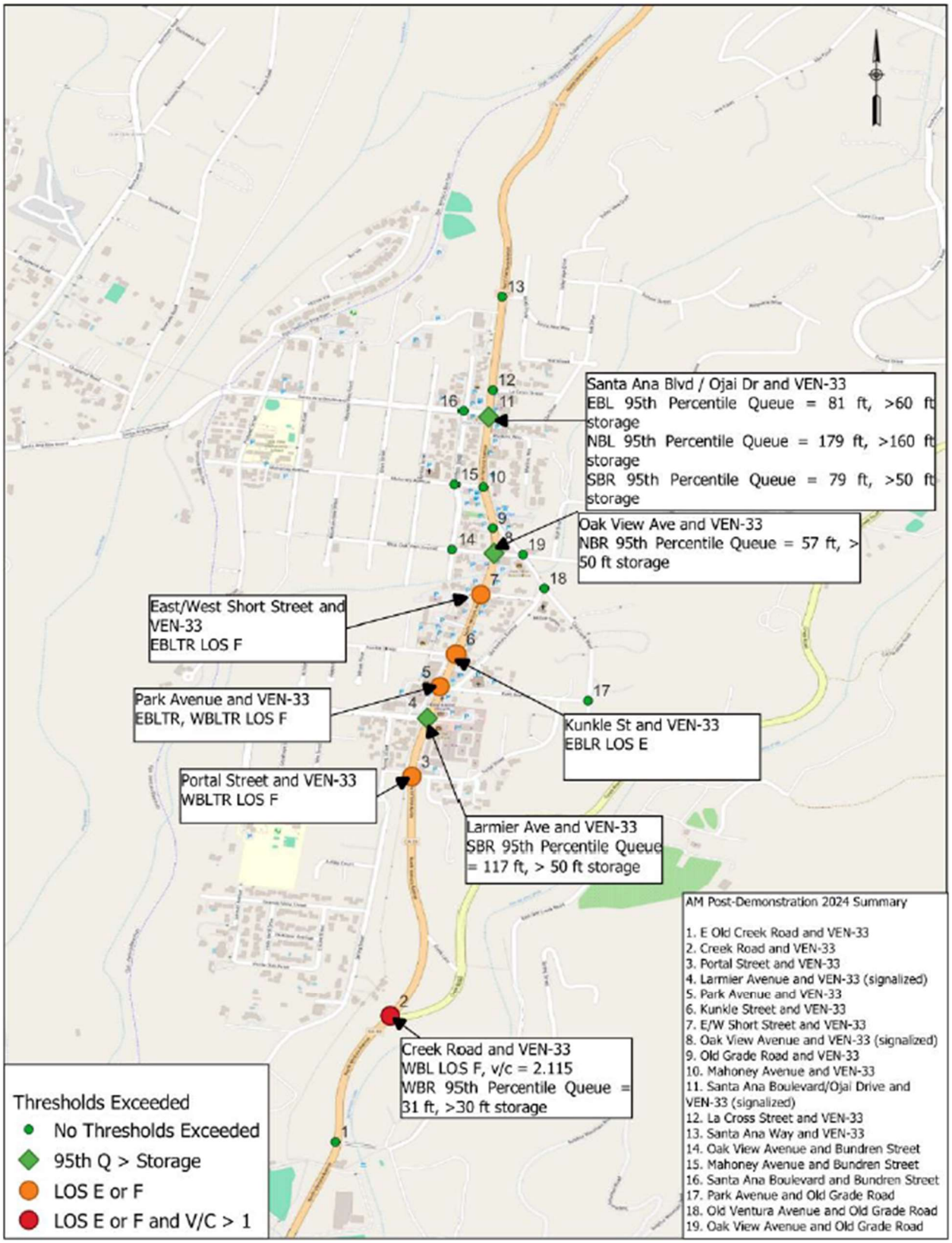
The above issues are graphically shown on Figures 8 and 9 for the AM and PM peak hours respectively.

Figure 8: AM Peak Hour Post Demonstration Summary of Issues



Source: TOAR 2024

Figure 9: PM Peak Hour Post Demonstration Summary of Issues



Source: TOAR 2024

After implementing the demonstration project, the traffic impact to the minor streets is similar to the pre-demonstration project scenario, though the eastbound movement for Kunkle Street and for Old Grade Road deteriorate to LOS E and LOS F respectively. While these movements have degraded as a result of the demonstration project, the level of service for the mainline northbound and southbound movements for all intersections along SR-33 remain within acceptable thresholds (LOS D or better) as there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the traffic demand, even after the lane reduction.

Corridor Performance

Corridor performance measures of effectiveness, represented by travel route times obtained from traffic modeling program, Vissim, are compared with the route travel times obtained from the Google Maps Application Programming Interface (API) and are presented below in Table 4 and 5. Average travel times along the study corridor in each peak hour and direction generally range between two to three minutes. The pre-demonstration project conditions are also included to allow a side-by-side comparison of traffic analysis results for each peak hour.

Table 4: Pre- and Post-Demonstration Existing (2024) AM Peak Hour Average Travel Time Comparison in Seconds

Corridor Measure of Effectiveness	Direction	AM Peak Hour Pre-Demonstration (January 2024)	AM Peak Hour Post-Demonstration (April 2024)
Average Travel Time – Vissim (Seconds)	Northbound	164	170
	Southbound	160	169
Route Travel Time – Google Maps API (Seconds)	Northbound	161	170
	Southbound	166	174

Source: TOAR 2024

Table 5: Pre- and Post-Demonstration Existing (2024) PM Peak Hour Average Travel Time Comparison in Seconds

Corridor Measure of Effectiveness	Direction	PM Peak Hour Pre-Demonstration (January 2024)	PM Peak Hour Post-Demonstration (April 2024)
Average Travel Time – Vissim (Seconds)	Northbound	158	171

	Southbound	157	167
Route Travel Time – Google Maps API (Seconds)	Northbound	159	170
	Southbound	175	178

Source: TOAR 2024

As indicated in Tables 4 and 5, the differences between travel times from both sources are minor; however, the travel times reported from the Google Maps API are generally slightly higher than those obtained from Vissim model. During the AM peak period, the travel times reported by the Google Maps API were slightly lower in the northbound direction under the pre-demonstration scenario and lower under the post-demonstration scenario during the PM peak period. Even with these variations, the differences in the travel times remain under 15 seconds.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would have no changes made to the existing facility. No action would be taken to improve the existing road condition and the road quality would continue to deteriorate. The safety of bicyclists and pedestrians would continue to be at risk from the lack of a bike lane and sidewalk infrastructure. The traffic conditions would be similar to the Pre-Demonstration Existing conditions.

Build Alternative A1 – Pre-Demonstration Conditions

Traffic and Transportation

Under Build Alternative A1, the existing configuration of SR-33 and current number of lanes would remain. Traffic conditions would be similar to the *No-Build Alternative* and the *Pre-Demonstration Existing* conditions as shown in the previous section. No minimization measures are proposed for Build Alternative A1 as traffic conditions are anticipated to remain at an acceptable threshold.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The implementation of upgraded safety features would improve safety for pedestrians, motorists, and bus users. However, the lack of a bicycle lane may continue to put bicycle users at risk

Build Alternative A2 – Post-Demonstration Conditions

Traffic and Transportation - Opening Year 2029

The traffic analysis results for the Opening Year 2029 scenario are similar to the *Post-Demonstration* conditions shown in the previous section, with mainly low-volume

eastbound and westbound movements turning onto SR-33 falling short of acceptable thresholds. That said, many of these traffic operations issues would have occurred even if the demonstration project was not implemented, due to general growth of traffic along SR-33. Of note, in the AM peak hour, the southbound through movement on Larmier Avenue and SR-33 has an acceptable delay of 21 seconds (LOS C), it has an estimated Volume to Capacity (v/c) ratio of 0.96 after implementing the demonstration project. The removal of the lane in the demonstration project and the subsequent drop in capacity causes traffic demand for this movement to almost exceed the available capacity. Otherwise, the operating conditions of the signalized intersections are still within acceptable thresholds, though the subsequent increase in overall intersection v/c ratios suggest that there may not be much capacity remaining to accommodate future growth. In terms of queues, the estimated queue for the northbound left turn lane at Portal Street is expected to exceed the available storage length during conditions associated with the demonstration project.

Minimization measures were developed as part of the traffic analysis to address these challenges and are presented in the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures section. With these minimization measures, performance of the SR-33 corridor in the post-demonstration scenario are anticipated to be similar to existing conditions or within acceptable operating thresholds.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The implementation of upgraded safety features would improve safety for pedestrians, motorists, and bus users. The addition of a bike lane as part of Build Alternative A2 would improve safety for bicycle users. Design Option 1 would implement a Class IV buffered bike lane, which would add an additional layer of protection for bicyclists. Design Option 2 would implement a non-buffered Class II bike lane, which would provide some safety improvement for bicyclists.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This section identifies several potential minimization measures to address the key identified issues within the demonstration project boundaries between Larmier Avenue and Santa Ana Boulevard/Ojai Drive on SR-33 for the post-demonstration project scenarios in 2024 and 2029. Additionally, the intersection at Portal Street/SR-33, which falls outside the demonstration project boundaries, is also included in this section due to the intersection being near the demonstration project limits. Following project approval, the Project Development Team shall evaluate these measures further in the Design phase to determine feasibility and may revise the measures as needed to prioritize traffic efficiency and safety.

Minimization T-1: Address degraded LOS for side street traffic during the AM peak period at East Portal Street.

- Peak hour left turn restriction on the eastbound movement. It is noted that alternative access to SR-33 northbound during the AM peak period is available at the adjacent signalized intersection at Larmier Ave.

- Consideration of a traffic signal at East Portal Street/SR-33 intersection, along with removal of the traffic signal at the Larmier Ave/SR-33 intersection.

Minimization T-2: Address degraded LOS for side street during the AM and PM peak periods at Park Street.

- Peak hour left turn restriction on the westbound movement. It is noted that alternate access to SR-33 southbound is available through the signalized intersection at Oak View Ave.

- Peak hour left turn restrictions on the eastbound movement (private driveway). It is noted that alternative access to SR-33 northbound is available through the signalized intersection at Larmier Ave.

Minimization T-3: Address degraded LOS for the side street during AM and PM peak periods at Short Street.

- Peak hour left turn restriction on the westbound movement. It is noted that alternate access to SR-33 southbound is available through the signalized intersection at Oak View Ave.

Minimization T-4: Address degraded LOS for side street turning onto SR-33 during AM and PM peak periods at Old Grade Street.

- Full time restriction “no left turn” for westbound to southbound movement due to safety concerns and complex intersection geometry. These movements can be made at the Oak View Ave signalized intersection.

Minimization T-5: Larmier Ave Intersection Turn Lane Storage – Extend the storage length from 50 feet to 115 feet for the southbound right turn lane to minimize storage length issue during peak hours.

Minimization T-6: Oak View Ave Intersection Turn Lane Storage - Extend the storage length from 50 feet to 75 feet for the northbound right turn lane to minimize storage length issue during peak hours.

Minimization T-7: Santa Ana Blvd/Ojai Dr Intersection Turn Lane Storage – Extend the storage length from 160 feet to 220 feet for the northbound left turn lane and from 50 feet to 120 feet for the southbound right turn lane to minimize storage length issue during peak hours.

Minimization T-8: Larmier Ave Traffic Signal Optimization – Extend the southbound through green phase by ~10 seconds to minimize corridor travel time issue.

2.3 Construction Impacts

Construction activities associated with Build Alternatives A1 and A2 are anticipated to be temporary and will be reduced through avoidance and minimization measures, as well as implementation of Caltrans standard specifications and best management practices. The following discussion highlights the construction impacts that may be encountered for each environmental resource and avoidance and minimization measures that will be implemented to address these temporary impacts.

No construction impacts are associated with Existing and Future Land Use, Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans/Programs, Coastal Zone, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Parks and Recreational Facilities, Farmlands and Timberlands, Growth, Community Character and Cohesion, Relocations and Real Property Acquisition, Environmental Justice, Visual/Aesthetics, Hydrology and Floodplain, Geology.

2.3.1 Relocation and Real Property Acquisition

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

During project construction, it is anticipated that twenty (20) Temporary Construction Easements (TCE) over nineteen (17) parcels will be needed for construction of ADA curb ramps and sidewalks. The TCEs are minor in nature, i.e., a few feet wide at the edge of the property adjacent to Caltrans or public right-of-way to make room for staging and construction. There are no relocations involved with the 20 TCEs. Following construction completion, Caltrans relinquishes the portion of property to the landowner.

Table 6: List of Temporary Construction Easements

Parcel Number	Address	Land Use Designation
061-0-121-160	445 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-131-030	500 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-131-075	530 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-107-135	423 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-107-055	550 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-107-065	566 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
061-0-080-450	595 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-105-055	690 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
034-0-103-035	710 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
031-0-190-155	790 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
061-0-047-050	805 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
031-0-190-545	820 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
031-0-190-170	830 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
031-0-183-110	880 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
033-0-372-090	11408 N Ventura Ave	Commercial
017-0-301-115	1301 Maricopa Hwy	Commercial
019-0-180-080	1200 Maricopa Hwy	Commercial

Source: ROW Datasheet

2.3.2 Utilities/Emergency Services

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

During construction, impacts to utilities would be very low to none as Caltrans will follow standard specifications and procedures when installing beacons and upgrading signals.

Emergency services may be temporarily impacted during project construction due to slowed speeds in construction areas. These impacts will be minimized by developing and implementing a Traffic Management Plan (Minimization T-9) to minimize congestion and delays during construction, and to implement Caltrans Standard Specifications. Additional information can be found in the Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities section below.

2.3.3 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

Impacts to emergency services, pedestrians, and bicyclists are anticipated during the construction phase. Slowed speeds in construction areas may cause delays and traffic congestion, which may impact motorists and businesses in the surrounding area. These impacts will be minimized by developing and implementing a traffic management plan (Minimization T-9) to minimize congestion and delays during construction, and implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications.

Further outreach and communication will also be conducted as part of the Traffic Management Plan to keep residents informed of the project's progress and to address any concerns or issues that arise during the construction phase.

Community outreach may include:

- Community Meetings: Community meetings will inform residents and stakeholders about proposed construction plans and address any concerns or questions.

- Social Media: Social media platforms can reach a wider audience and inform the public of traffic pattern changes and construction updates. This can include posting updates on the project website, Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram and creating engaging content such as videos or infographics.

- Newsletters and Flyers: Sending out newsletters or flyers to residents in the affected area can provide detailed information on project construction, including what to expect and any potential disruptions to their daily routines.

- Public Service Announcements: Using local radio or TV stations to broadcast public service announcements can help to inform a wider audience about project construction and any changes they should be aware of.

- Road Signs and Message Boards: Clear and visible road signs and message boards can help inform drivers about project construction, any detours or alternate routes, and guide navigating through the area.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization T-9: A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be implemented to minimize direct and cumulative construction impacts on the community. The TMP shall be developed in coordination with the Ventura County Transportation Commission. It shall be provided with the construction plan to the City of Ventura, City of Ojai, and County of Ventura Police and Fire Departments before the beginning of construction activities. The TMP may include the following implementation plans:

Public Information: Provide project updates to affected residents and businesses. Information may be distributed via brochures and mailers, social media, public service announcements, community meetings, and website information.

Motorist Information: Provide project information using changeable message signs and ground-mounted signs.

Incident Management: Implement construction zone enhanced enforcement program, freeway service patrol, and California Highway Patrol traffic handling.

Traffic Management During Construction: Provide a traffic lane closure chart, detour routes, pedestrian routes, residential and commercial access routes, and temporary traffic signage during construction.

All construction activities would follow standard Caltrans guidelines (Caltrans Standard Specifications 2023).

2.3.4 Cultural Resources

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

There is a low probability of encountering buried archaeological resources during construction. However, out of an abundance of caution and at the request of Native American consulting parties, Caltrans District 7 will require monitoring for project construction excavation, with the requirement to be adjusted as construction necessitates as outlined in the Post-Review Discovery and Monitoring Plan (PRDMP) prepared for the project for whichever alternative is selected as the preferred. Implementation of measures C-1 and C-2 shall minimize any potential construction impacts to the maximum extent feasible.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization C-1: The stipulations outlined in the PRDMP shall be followed during project construction. The PRDMP requires at least one Archaeological Monitor and one Native American Monitor to observe ground-disturbing activities for construction in

native soil that is not replacement-in-kind. If cultural features and deposits are uncovered during construction, the post-review and discovery fieldwork methods shall be followed.

Minimization C-2: If buried cultural materials are encountered during construction, it is Caltrans policy that work in that area must stop until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. Should project plans change to include areas that were not surveyed, additional archaeological studies will be required.

2.2.4 Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

According to the Stormwater Data Report (2019), the total Disturbed Soil Area (DSA) is approximately 0.333 acres. Since the DSA is less than 1 acre, a Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) is required. Temporary construction site best management practices (BMPs) shall be implemented to minimize construction stormwater pollution to the maximum extent feasible. Examples of temporary BMPs may include straw mulch, silt fencing, sediment traps, fiber rolls, gravel bags, and street sweeping.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization WQ-1: The contractor shall prepare and submit a complete Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) to the Caltrans Resident Engineer for review and acceptance. The WPCP must comply with Caltrans Standard Specifications. Temporary construction site BMPs shall be implemented in accordance with the WPCP.

2.2.5 Paleontology

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

Based on initial project review by the Caltrans Paleontological Coordinator, the proposed project is unlikely to contain any scientifically important fossils in the proposed excavation area. Therefore, construction impacts are not anticipated for paleontological resources. In the unlikely event that paleontological resources are encountered, Minimization P-1 shall be followed.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization P-1: If unanticipated Paleontological resources are encountered, Caltrans shall follow Section 14-7 “Paleontological Resources” of the Caltrans Standard Specifications. This entails stopping all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery, securing the area, and notifying the resident engineer. The resident must then notify the Caltrans Paleontological Coordinator for further direction.

2.2.6 Hazardous Waste

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

A Hazardous Waste Assessment (HWA) was completed in May 2023; the HWA identified potential hazardous materials occurring within the project area. These materials include Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL), petroleum hydrocarbons, lead and chromium in yellow thermoplastic traffic stripe and pavement marking, electronic waste, and treated wood waste. These materials are common to highway construction projects. All temporary construction impacts would each be minimized by the below measures.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization HW-1 The contractor shall prepare a project specific Lead Compliance Plan (LCP) to protect workers from exposure to hazards from lead while removing and handling ADL and the yellow traffic stripe residue, and a Work Plan for handling and testing of residue prior to transport to and disposal at an appropriate disposal facility.

Minimization HW-2 The contractor will handle, store, transport, and dispose of treated wood waste in accordance with Caltrans standard special provision 14-11.14.

Minimization HW-3 The contractor will dispose of electronic waste in accordance with Caltrans standard specification 14-11.15.

2.2.7 Air Quality

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

Short-term degradation of air quality is expected during construction from the release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and other activities related to construction. Emissions from construction equipment powered by gasoline and diesel engines are also anticipated. Construction activities are expected to increase traffic congestion in the area, resulting in increases in emissions from traffic during the delays.

These emissions would be temporary and limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site. Implementation of the following measures (AQ-1 to AQ-13) will reduce air quality impacts resulting from construction activities.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization AQ-1: Soil binder will be spread on any unpaved roads used for construction purposes and on all project construction parking areas.

Minimization AQ-2: Trucks will be washed as they leave the right-of-way as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions.

Minimization AQ-3: Construction equipment and vehicles will be properly tuned and maintained. All construction equipment will use low-sulfur fuel as required by the CA Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 93114.

Avoidance AQ-4: Equipment and materials storage sites will be located as far away from residential, and park uses as practicable. Construction areas will be kept clean and orderly.

Minimization AQ-5: All transported loads of soil and wet materials will be covered before transport, or adequate freeboard (space from the top of the material to the top of the truck) will be provided to minimize the emission of dust during transportation.

Minimization AQ-6: Dust and mud that are deposited on paved, public roads due to construction activity and traffic will be promptly and regularly removed to reduce PM emissions.

Minimization AQ-7: The project is located within the jurisdiction of the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) and must comply with the Air District Rules.

Minimization AQ-8: Construction contractors working on this project will be mandated to comply with all applicable VCAPCD Rules and to be responsible for payment of all fees as required.

Minimization AQ-9: Environmentally sensitive areas will be established near sensitive air receptors. Within these areas, construction activities involving the extended idling of diesel equipment or vehicles will be prohibited to the extent feasible.

Minimization AQ-10: Objectionable odors should also be minimized by conducting certain construction activities in areas at least 500 feet from the sensitive receptors as feasible.

Minimization AQ-11: The construction contractor must comply with Caltrans' Standard Specifications in Section 14-9 (2023). Section 14-9.02 specifically requires compliance by the contractor with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances. Nonstandard Specification 14-9.05 shall also be added to the project Specifications package to ensure contractor compliance with all applicable air quality regulations.

Minimization AQ-12: Track-out reduction measures will be used, such as gravel pads at project access points to minimize dust and mud deposits on roads affected by construction traffic.

Minimization AQ-13: Water or dust palliative will be applied to the site and equipment as often as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions.

2.2.8 Noise

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

Per the Noise Review Memorandum (August 2022) this project is not expected to raise traffic noise levels or cause a substantial noise increase. However, due to noise sensitive receptors in the project vicinity, potential construction noise impacts will be addressed through the following minimization measure.

Avoidance and Minimization

Minimization N-1 Section 14-8.02, Sound Control Requirements, of Caltrans' Standard Specifications states that construction noise levels should not exceed sustained 86 dBA at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. These requirements also state that noise levels generated during construction shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

2.2.9 Energy

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

Project construction would consume fuels such as diesel, gasoline, and electricity while operating a variety of construction vehicles, equipment, and tools, including heavy-duty trucks, delivery or hauling trucks, passenger vehicles by workers, and portable or stationary tools. However, energy usage from construction activities is not considered significant and would be temporary in nature.

2.2.10 Biological Environment

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

The proposed project has potential to affect nesting birds during construction from activities such as vegetation trimming, and noise generated by other construction activities. The following measure shall be implemented to avoid any direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds.

Avoidance and Minimization

Avoidance BIO-1: Caltrans will avoid impacts to nesting birds by scheduling construction outside of the nesting bird season, which is from February 1 to September 1. If construction is scheduled during the nesting bird season, then pre-construction nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no later than three days before construction activity. If active nesting birds are observed within the work zone, then the biologist will establish a no-work buffer around the nest until the fledglings are independent. The typical buffer is 150 feet for songbirds and other non-raptors and 500 feet for raptors. If there is a lapse of three days or more after the initial survey, then the project area will need to be surveyed again.

The No Build Alternative will not have any project related construction impacts; there is no change.

2.4 Cumulative Impacts

Regulatory Setting

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed project. A cumulative effect assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, alteration of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as changes in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts. The definition of cumulative impacts under CEQA can be found in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines. A definition of cumulative impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) can be found in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 1508.7.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives A1 & A2

Incremental cumulative impacts as a result of the proposed project are not considered to be adverse and are temporary. All temporary impacts described in the above sections associated with Build Alternatives A1 and A2 would each be minimized and therefore, would not have a cumulative impact to the human, physical, or biological environment. The lane reduction associated with Build Alternative A2 is anticipated to have a net benefit to safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

No-Build Alternative B

With the No-Build Alternative, there would be no change to the existing facility and no upgrades would be implemented. Cumulative impacts may occur as the roadway will continue to deteriorate.

Chapter 3 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Evaluation

Determining Significance under CEQA

The proposed project is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation (Department) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 United States Code Section 327 (23 USC 327) and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans. The Department is the lead agency under CEQA and NEPA.

One of the primary differences between NEPA and CEQA is the way significance is determined. Under NEPA, significance is used to determine whether an EIS, or a lower level of documentation, will be required. NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) *as a whole* has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The determination of significance is based on context and intensity. Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under NEPA. Under NEPA, once a decision is made regarding the need for an EIS, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated and no judgment of its individual significance is deemed important for the text. NEPA does not require that a determination of significant impacts be stated in the environmental documents.

CEQA, on the other hand, does require the Department to identify each "<u>significant effect on the environment</u>" resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource, then an EIR must be prepared. Each and every significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the EIR and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines list a number of "<u>mandatory findings of significance</u>," which also require the preparation of an EIR. There are no types of actions under NEPA that parallel the findings of mandatory significance of CEQA. This chapter discusses the effects of this project and CEQA significance.

CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related

to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project, and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices (BMPs) and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below; see Chapters 1 and 2 for a detailed discussion of these features. The annotations to this checklist are summaries of information contained in Chapter 2 in order to provide the reader with the rationale for significance determinations; for a more detailed discussion of the nature and extent of impacts, please see Chapter 2. This checklist incorporates by reference the information contained in Chapters 1 and 2.

3.1.1 Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics

a – d) No Impact

The proposed project is not located on a scenic highway and would not impact scenic vistas or resources. The visual character of the environment will not be impacted, as the proposed project is anticipated to enhance the visual character of the area by upgrading the current roadway infrastructure and including landscaping elements to the project design such as native plants/trees where needed. No new sources of substantial light or glare would be created.

3.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

Question	CEQA Determination
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?	No Impact
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	No Impact
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	No Impact
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources

a-e) No Impact

There are no agricultural and forest resources within the project area. Therefore, no impacts will occur.

3.1.3 Air Quality

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

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No Impact
b) 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?	No Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	Less Than Significant Impact
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	Less Than Significant Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality

No Impact

a) This project will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan.

b) This project will not 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.

Less Than Significant Impacts

c & d) Sensitive receptors found in the project area include Community Memorial Hospital, St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Nordhoff Junior High & High School, and various residential areas and neighborhoods. During construction, short-term degradation of air quality is expected from the release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and other activities related to construction. These emissions would be temporary and limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site. Sensitive receptors would be marked and Avoidance and Minimization measures AQ-1 through AQ-13 as outlined in section 2.2.7 Air Quality, shall minimize any potential air quality impacts during construction to the maximum extent feasible.

3.1.4 Biological Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
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 Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries?	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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	No Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources

No Impact

a) There are no candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries within the project impact area. Therefore, this project will not have a substantial adverse effect on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species.

b) There are no riparian habitats or other sensitive natural communities identified in the local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the project impact area. The only natural community, Oak Woodlands, is adjacent to the project and will not be adversely affected

because the project impact area is outside of the root zones. Therefore, this project will not have no impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities.

c) There are no state or federally protected wetlands within the project area. Therefore, this project will not have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands.

d) The project is a multi-asset roadway rehabilitation project that is within a developed area. No movement of native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or native wildlife sites will be impacted as the project is on previously graded/disturbed areas. Use of native wildlife nurseries will not be impeded.

e) The project is a multi-asset roadway rehabilitation project that will conduct work on previously graded/paved surfaces. No biological resources protected by the local policies or ordinances will be impacted as a result of the project.

f) The project does not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan as the build alternatives do not remove or alter biological resources within the area.

3.1.5 Cultural Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in §15064.5?	No Impact
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	No Impact
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources

No Impact

a) There will be no impact in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to in §15064.5 because there are no historical resources within the project impact area.

b) There will be no impact in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5 because there are no historical resources within the project impact area.

c) This project will not disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries. Should human remains be found during construction, construction will halt until an archaeologist can assess the significance of the find.

3.1.6 Energy

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	No Impact
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy

No Impact

a & b)

This project would not result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation. It would also not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, as the smoother pavement resulting from the proposed project would not only ensure safer highway networks, but also help reduce pavement-vehicle friction, and thereby reduce overall fuel consumption. Upgrading Transportation Systems Management (TMS) will also allow better maintenance and restore the performance of the existing transportation facilities.

3.1.7 Geology and Soils

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Directly or indirectly cause 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 issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	No Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
iv) Landslides?	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils

No Impact

a) – e) The proposed project does not involve extensive ground disturbance that would disturb geologic resources and soils. The extent of the project is located on ground that has been previously disturbed from the establishment of the current highway infrastructure. Therefore, the project would not rupture a known earthquake fault that would cause seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, or loss of topsoil. The proposed project is also located on stable soil and can support the use of wastewater disposal systems.

f) The project does not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. A majority of the proposed project lies on alluvial deposits, which are assigned a low paleontological sensitivity. SR-33 has also been subjected to extensive disturbance from previous construction and maintenance, as well as development within the communities of Casitas Springs and Oak View. Therefore, impacts to Paleontological Resources are not anticipated.

3.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

No Impact

b) This project will not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Less Than Significant Impact

a) While the proposed project will result in increase in GHG emissions due to the use of equipment during construction, the emissions are considered temporary lasting about 530 days or approximately 1.5 years for both build alternatives.

Alternative A1 would maintain the current configuration of SR-33. Upgraded pavement would also reduce GHG emissions by improving road surface smoothness, which leads to less fuel consumption by vehicles, thereby lowering the emissions produced during driving.

Alternative A2 would implement a road diet, or lane reduction, which can improve safety, calm traffic, and provide better mobility and access for all road users. According to the Policy Brief – Impact of Highway Capacity and Induced Travel on Passenger Vehicle Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions by the California Air Resources Board (September 2014), the reduction of highway vehicle capacity causes a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which may in turn reduce GHG emissions.[1] With the implementation of traffic reduction measures T-1 through T-8 previously mentioned in Section 2.2.2, any potential operational GHG emissions would be minimized to a less than significant level. In addition, based on the traffic study, overall traffic delay is not expected to increase in the project area. Therefore, the project is not expected to result

[1] https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Impact_of_Highway_Capacity_and_Induced_Travel_on_Passenger_Vehicle_Use_and_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Policy_Brief.pdf

in increase in operational GHG emissions and is anticipated to improve motorists' safety while offering an alternate mode of transportation.

Additional information on GHG emissions may be found in Chapter 3.5 Climate Change.

3.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	Less Than Significant Impact
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?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	Less Than Significant Impact
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?	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two nautical miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	No Impact
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	Less Than Significant Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials

No Impact

d) The project is not 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, it would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

e) The project is not located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two nautical miles of a public airport or public use airport, and the project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.

g) The project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires

Less Than Significant Impact

a) Routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous material may be needed during project construction. However, these activities would be temporary in nature and would be minimized through enforcement of Caltrans Standard and Non-Standard Specifications & Procedures.

b & c) There is potential for exposure to general hazardous waste/material during construction. Construction activities in Build Alternative A1 and A2 could expose workers to contaminants associated with yellow traffic striping, aerially deposited lead, petroleum hydrocarbons, as well as electronic and treated wood waste. Handling of the potentially hazardous waste would occur within one-quarter mile of an existing School (Sunset School). Any potential exposure to hazardous waste/materials will be minimized to the maximum extent feasible through Caltrans Standard and Non-Standard Specifications & Procedures and avoidance and minimization measures HW-1 through HW-3 as mentioned in Section 2.2.6 and Appendix B: Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Summary.

f) The proposed project is not anticipated to substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan. Build Alternative A1 would maintain the current number of lanes, which would maintain current emergency response times.

Build Alternative A2 may impact response times, as geometric features of the lane reduction may cause delays. However, any potential delays are not anticipated to be significant. When emergency responders need to use SR-33, drivers will need to pull over into the bike lane to allow emergency vehicles to pass. In the case where the bike lane has a protected barrier, emergency vehicles may use the center median to bypass vehicle traffic. Options for the design of Build Alternative A2 will be further evaluated in the Project Design phase, and Caltrans will continue to coordinate with all affected emergency responders in the project area to minimize any potential delays in emergency response times. Additional information may be found in Section 2.2.1 Utilities and Emergency Services.

3.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	No Impact
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	No Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	No Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	No Impact
(iii) 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; or	No Impact
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	No Impact
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

No Impact

a) – e) The proposed project would take place on existing facility and would primarily involve restriping and upgrading the current highway infrastructure. Groundwater will not be impacted as part of the proposed project, drainage patterns will remain the same, and the project is not located in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zone. Therefore, there would be no impacts to hydrology and water quality following project construction and the project will not obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or groundwater management plan. During construction, the contractor will be required to prepare a Water Pollution Control Program (Minimization WQ-1) to minimize any stormwater pollutants generated during construction.

3.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Physically divide an established community?	No Impact
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning

No Impact

a) The proposed project would occur on existing highway facilities and would not physically divide an established community.

b) The project would not cause an impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Current land uses in the project area will remain the same.

3.1.12 Mineral Resources

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources

No Impact

a) – b) The proposed project is primarily located on alluvial deposits and would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state.

3.1.13 Noise

Would the project result in:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or 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?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise

No Impact

c) The proposed project is not located within the vicinity of an airstrip or airport land use plan.

Less Than Significant Impact

a) – b) During project construction, an increase in ambient noise level and ground borne vibration may occur due to construction activity. However, this impact is temporary in nature and will be minimized through the incorporation of noise minimization measure N-1 mentioned in Section 2.2.8 Noise. Following project construction, noise levels are anticipated to return to current conditions.

3.1.14 Population and Housing

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Induce substantial unplanned 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)?	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing

No Impact

a) This project will not induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly. Build Alternative A1 does not involve creating new access, housing, or capacity of other services. Build Alternative A2 would convert an existing vehicle lane to a bike lane, which would create new access for bicyclists. However, the lane reduction would not induce population growth in the area, as restriping would occur on existing facilities and no new road extensions would occur.

b) This project will not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

3.1.15 Public Services

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 following public services:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Fire protection?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Police protection?	Less Than Significant Impact
c) Schools?	No Impact
d) Parks?	No Impact
e) Other public facilities?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services

c-e) No Impact

No schools, parks, or other public facilities will be impacted by the proposed project.

a-b) Less Than Significant Impact

Build Alternative A1 would maintain the current number of lanes, which would maintain current emergency response times.

Build Alternative A2 may impact response times, as geometric features of the lane reduction may cause delays. However, any potential delays are not anticipated to be significant. When emergency responders need to use SR-33, drivers will need to pull over into the bike lane to allow emergency vehicles to pass. In the case where the bike lane has a protected barrier, emergency vehicles may use the center median to bypass vehicle traffic. Options for the design of Build Alternative A2 will be further evaluated in the Project Design phase, and Caltrans will continue to coordinate with all affected emergency responders in the project area to minimize any potential delays in emergency response times.

3.1.16 Recreation

Question	CEQA Determination
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?	No Impact
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?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation

No Impact

a) This project would not 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.

b) This project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.1.17 Transportation

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	No Impact
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	No Impact
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	No Impact
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	Less Than Significant Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation

Less Than Significant Impact

d) During construction, traffic-related impacts may affect emergency response times. To minimize this impact, Caltrans will implement and develop a Traffic Management Plan during the project Design and Construction phases. See Minimization measure T-9. Both Build Alternatives A1 and A2 would not result in inadequate emergency access. Build Alternative A1 would maintain the current number of lanes, which would maintain current emergency response times. Build Alternative A2 would not impact response times, as emergency vehicles will be allowed to bypass traffic using the center two-way left-turn lane.

No Impact

a) The project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. The project is programmed in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) 2021 and is consistent with SCAG's 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan.

As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, the overall impact to traffic for Build Alternative A1 would be similar to the existing condition. Traffic is not expected to increase significantly as a result of Build Alternative A1.

Build Alternative A2 is similar to the Post-Demonstration condition with mainly low-volume eastbound and westbound movements turning onto SR-33 falling short of acceptable thresholds. That said, many of these traffic operations issues would have occurred even if the demonstration project was not implemented due to general growth

of traffic along SR-33. With the incorporation of measures T-1 to T-8, traffic impacts are expected to be minimized to a Less Than Significant level.

Build Alternative A2 is consistent with the California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2040, which would improve multimodal mobility and accessibility, the Ventura Countywide Bicycle Master Plan by expanding and optimizing the project area's bicycle facilities, and the Ventura County Active Transportation Plan implementing pedestrian and bicyclist facilities within the County's unincorporated communities.

b) The project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b). The proposed project is not capacity-increasing, and therefore is not anticipated to increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

c) The proposed project would be designed to current state and federal engineering standards. There are no geometric design features as part of the project design that would substantially increase hazards.

3.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	No Impact
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources

No Impact

a) Tribal cultural resources listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k) are not identified within the project impact area. Therefore, the project will not cause substantial adverse changes in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074.

b) This project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

3.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	No Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	No Impact
c) 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 commitments?	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	No Impact
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems

No Impact

a) The project does not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.

b) The project does not require water supplies to be available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

c) The project does not require 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 commitments.

d) The project would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals

e) The project would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

3.1.20 Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	Less Than Significant Impact
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	No Impact
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	No Impact
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire

Less Than Significant Impact

a) The proposed project is not anticipated to substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or evacuation plan. Build Alternative A1 would maintain the current number of lanes, which would maintain current emergency response times. Build Alternative A2 may impact response times, as geometric features of the lane reduction may cause delays. However, any potential delays are not anticipated to be significant. When emergency responders need to use SR-33, drivers will need to pull over into the bike lane to allow emergency vehicles to pass. In the case where the bike lane has a protected barrier, emergency vehicles may use the center median to bypass vehicle traffic. Options for the design of Build Alternative A2 will be further evaluated in the Project Design phase, and Caltrans will continue to coordinate with all affected emergency responders in the project area to minimize any potential delays in emergency response times.

No Impact

b) The proposed project would not implement any elements that would expose occupants to pollutants from a wildfire.

c) The proposed project would not install infrastructure that would exacerbate fire risk. The scope of the project includes upgrading the highway infrastructure to current standards and re-striping.

d) The proposed project would not increase risk or exposure to downslope flooding or landslides as a result of post-fire instability or drainage changes. Project construction would not involve grading slopes or heavy excavation.

3.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question	CEQA Determination
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially 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, substantially 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?	No Impact
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 of probable future projects)?	No Impact
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	No Impact

CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance

No Impact

a) The proposed project does not contain suitable habitat for sensitive biological resources. Therefore, no impact will occur. The project will also be constructed on existing facilities and previously disturbed ground and is not anticipated to impact historical resources.

b) The proposed project does not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable. The scope of the project includes upgrading existing transportation facilities to current standards. The lane reduction associated with Build Alternative A2 is anticipated to have a net benefit to safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

c) The proposed project would not have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. The proposed project is anticipated to improve safety for the traveling public by upgrading the existing highway infrastructure to current standards.

3.2 SENATE BILL 743/INDUCED DEMAND ANALYSIS

All capacity increasing projects on the State Highway System (SHS) are required to include a VMT-based transportation impact significance determination within the draft environmental document. However, most projects on the SHS are non-capacity increasing, are not anticipated to have significant transportation impacts under CEQA and would not require quantitative VMT analysis or mitigation.

Based on the described scope of work under both Build Alternatives, the proposed project can be screened under project types not likely to lead to a measurable and substantial increase in vehicle travel in the Transportation Analysis under CEQA (TAC) guidance (September 2020), and is therefore not subject to the requirements of SB 743.

3.3 WILDFIRE

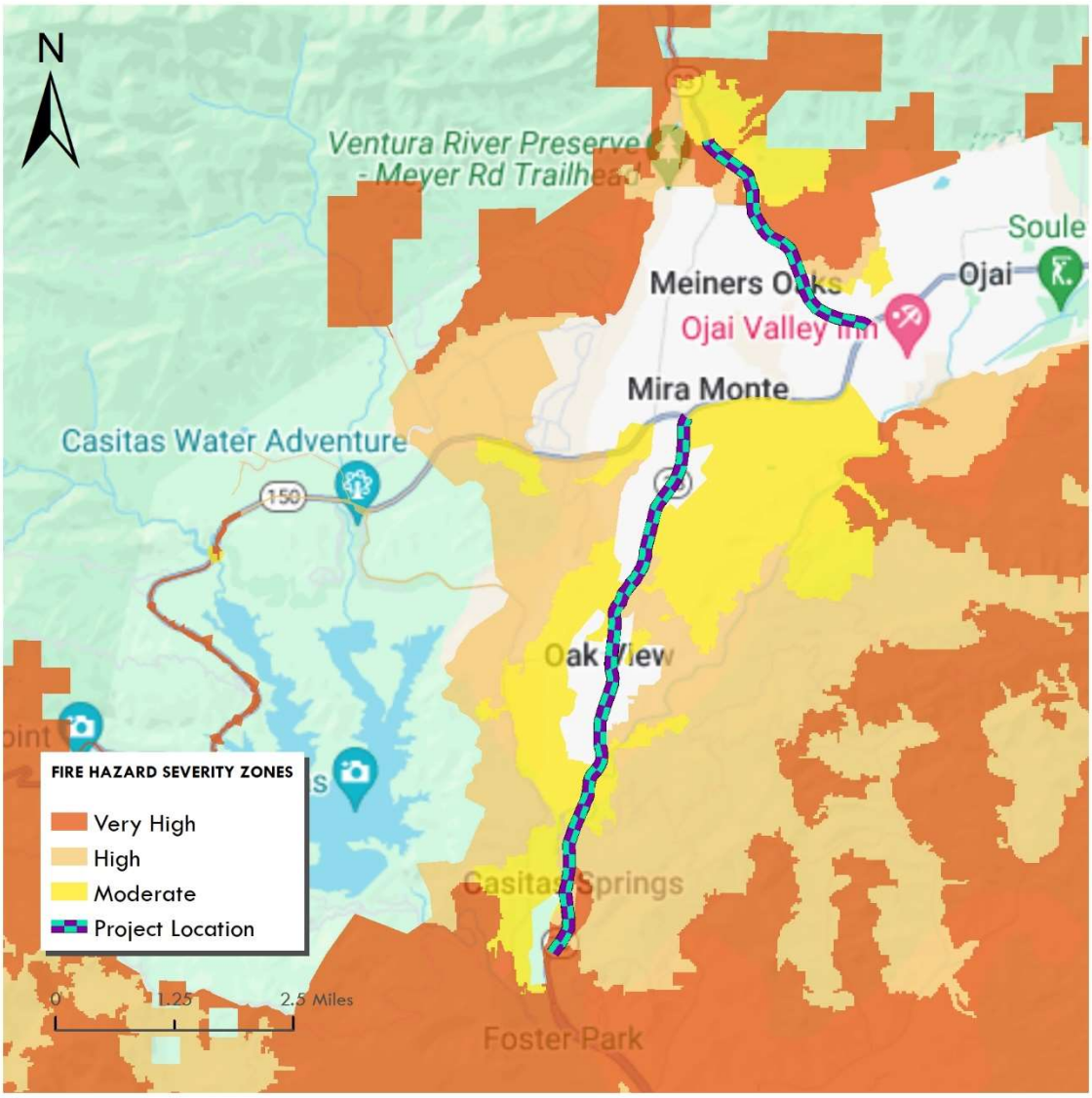
Regulatory Setting

Senate Bill 1241 required the Office of Planning and Research, the Natural Resources Agency, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop amendments to the “CEQA Checklist” for the inclusion of questions related to fire hazard impacts for projects located on lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The 2018 updates to the CEQA Guidelines expanded this to include projects “near” these very high fire hazard severity zones.

Affected Environment

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are areas in California that appear on fire zone maps and where physical conditions create moderate, high, and very high degrees of wildfire risk. Many factors are considered such as fire history, existing and potential fuel (natural vegetation), predicted flame length, blowing embers, terrain, and typical fire weather for the area. Figure 10 below shows the project location within the FHSZ.

Figure 10: Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map



Environmental Consequences

As an effect of climate change, it is expected that longer and more severe wildfire seasons will occur across California. The proposed project lies in an area mapped by CalFire as a Moderate Fire Hazard Safety Zone and Local Responsibility Area. Caltrans District 7 has mapped this portion of SR-33 as an Exposed Roadway and a medium level of concern in its models of future impacts of wildfire on state infrastructure. The proposed project aims to upgrade an existing facility and will not create new facilities within areas susceptible to wildfire hazards. The level of risk within the FHSZ in the project area would remain the same.

As previously mentioned in Section 3.1.20, project features will not substantially impair any emergency response or evacuation plans, exacerbate wildlife risks, or install associated infrastructure that would potentially increase wildfire risk. It does not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Wildfire risks are not anticipated to be increased due to the proposed project. Therefore, no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are warranted.

3.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the Earth's climate system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization in 1988, is devoted to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and climate change research and policy. Climate change in the past has generally occurred gradually over millennia or more suddenly in response to cataclysmic natural disruptions. The research of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other scientists over recent decades, however, has unequivocally attributed an accelerated rate of climatological changes over the past 150 years to GHG emissions generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

Human activities generate GHGs consisting primarily of carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), and various hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). CO_2 is the most abundant GHG; while it is a naturally occurring and necessary component of Earth’s atmosphere, fossil-fuel combustion is the main source of additional, human-generated CO_2 that is the main driver of climate change. In the U.S. and in California, transportation is the largest source of GHG emissions, mostly CO_2.

The impacts of climate change are already being observed in the form of sea level rise, drought, more intense heat, extended and severe fire seasons, and historic flooding from changing storm patterns. Both mitigation and adaptation strategies are necessary to address these impacts. The most important mitigation strategy is to reduce GHG emissions. In the context of climate change (as distinct from CEQA and NEPA), “mitigation” involves actions to reduce GHG emissions or to enhance the “sinks” that store them (such as forests and soils) to lessen adverse impacts. “Adaptation” is planning for and responding to impacts to reduce vulnerability to harm, such as by adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms, heat, and higher sea levels. This analysis will include a discussion of both in the context of this transportation project.

REGULATORY SETTING

For a full list of laws, regulations, and guidance related to climate change (GHGs and adaptation), please refer to Caltrans' Standard Environmental Reference (SER), Chapter 16, Climate Change.

Federal

To date, no nationwide numeric mobile-source GHG reduction targets have been established, nor have any regulations or legislation been enacted specifically to address climate change and GHG emissions reduction at the project level.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] Part 4332) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making a decision on the action or project. In January 2023, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued updated and expanded interim National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change (88 Fed. Reg. 1196) (CEQ NEPA GHG Guidance), in accordance with EO 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*, 86 FR 70935 (Dec. 13, 2021) and EO 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. The CEQ guidance does not establish numeric thresholds of significance, but emphasizes quantifying reasonably foreseeable lifetime direct and indirect emissions whenever possible. This guidance also emphasizes resilience and environmental justice in project-level climate change and GHG analyses.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the threats that extreme weather, sea level rise, and other changes in environmental conditions pose to valuable transportation infrastructure and those who depend on it. FHWA therefore supports a sustainability approach that assesses vulnerability to climate risks and incorporates resilience into planning, asset management, project development and design, and operations and maintenance practices (FHWA 2022). This approach encourages planning for sustainable highways by addressing climate risks while balancing environmental, economic, and social values— "the triple bottom line of sustainability" (FHWA n.d.). Program and project elements that foster sustainability and resilience also support economic vitality and global efficiency, increase safety and mobility, enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life.

Early efforts by the federal government to improve fuel economy and energy efficiency to address climate change and its associated effects include The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (42 USC Section 6201); and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards. The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) sets and enforces corporate average fuel economy (CAFÉ) standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States. The Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) calculates average fuel economy levels for manufacturers, and also sets related GHG emissions standards for vehicles under the Clean Air Act. Raising CAFE standards leads automakers to create a more fuel-efficient fleet, which improves our nation's energy security, saves consumers

money at the pump, and reduces GHG emissions (U.S. DOT 2014). These standards are periodically updated and published through the federal rulemaking process.

State

California has been innovative and proactive in addressing GHG emissions and climate change by passing multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders (EOs).

In 2005, EO S-3-05 initially set a goal to reduce California's GHG emissions to 80 percent below year 1990 levels by 2050, with interim reduction targets. Later EOs and Assembly and Senate bills refined interim targets and codified the emissions reduction goals and strategies. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) was directed to create a climate change scoping plan and implement rules to achieve "real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases." Ongoing GHG emissions reduction was also mandated in Health and Safety Code (H&SC) Section 38551(b). In 2022, the California Climate Crisis Act was passed, establishing state policy to reduce statewide human-caused GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels, achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2045, and achieve and maintain negative emissions thereafter.

Beyond GHG reduction, the State maintains a climate adaptation strategy to address the full range of climate change stressors, and passed legislation requiring state agencies to consider protection and management of natural and working lands as an important strategy in meeting the state's GHG reduction goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The proposed project is in Ventura County, on Highway 33, which supports three multimodal communities of Mira Monte, Oak View, and Casitas Springs, providing a balance of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers. Highway 33 is a winding two-lane California Highway stretching 15 miles from Ventura to Ojai and rising approximately 750 feet in elevation as it reaches into the foothills of the Los Padres National Forest. Unlike most state highways, Highway 33 has family communities closely adjacent to the roadside with a well-developed road and street network. The project area is mainly residential, with some light industrial and commercial buildings.

GHG Inventories

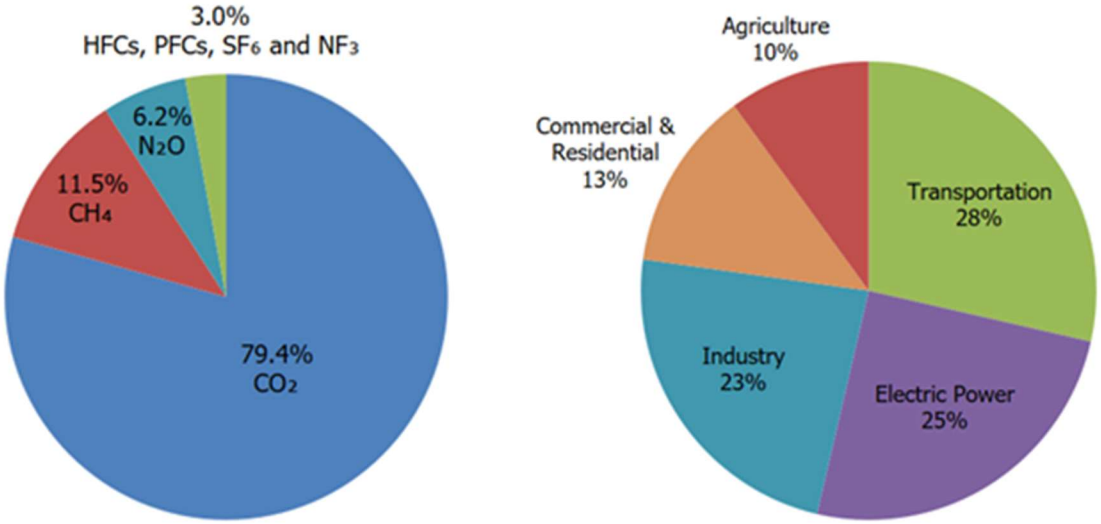
A GHG emissions inventory estimates the amount of GHGs discharged into the atmosphere by specific sources over a period of time. Tracking annual GHG emissions allows countries, states, and smaller jurisdictions to understand how emissions are changing and what actions may be needed to attain emission reduction goals. U.S. EPA is responsible for documenting GHG emissions nationwide, and the ARB does so for the state, as required by H&SC Section 39607.4. Cities and other local jurisdictions may also conduct local GHG inventories to inform their GHG reduction or climate action plans.

NATIONAL GHG INVENTORY

The annual GHG inventory submitted by the U.S. EPA to the United Nations provides a comprehensive accounting of all human-produced sources of GHGs in the United States. Total national GHG emissions from all sectors in 2021 were 5,586.0 million metric tons (MMT), factoring in deductions for carbon sequestration in the land sector. (Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry provide a carbon sink equivalent to 12% of total U.S. emissions in 2021 [U.S. EPA 2023a].) While total GHG emissions in 2021 were 17% below 2005 levels, they increased by 6% over 2020 levels. Of these, 79.4% were CO_2, 11.5% were CH_4, and 6.2% were N_2O; the balance consisted of fluorinated gases. From 1990 to 2021, CO_2 emissions decreased by only 2% (U.S. EPA 2023a).

The transportation sector's share of total GHG emissions increased to 28% in 2021 and remains the largest contributing sector (Figure 11). Transportation fossil fuel combustion accounted for 92% of all CO_2 emissions in 2021. This is an increase of 7% over 2020, largely due to the rebound in economic activity following the COVID-19 pandemic (U.S. EPA 2023a, 2023b)).

Figure 11: U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

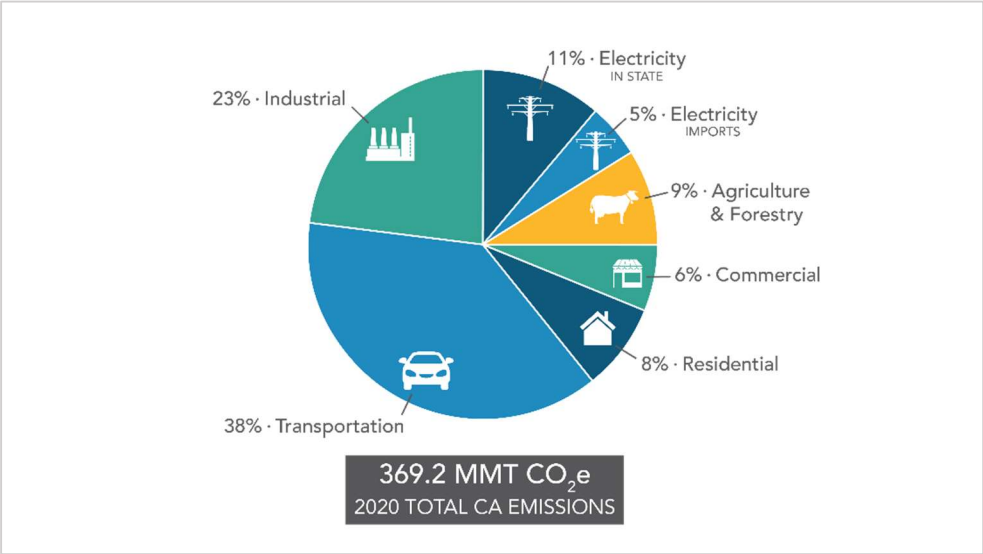


(Source: U.S. EPA 2023b)

STATE GHG INVENTORY

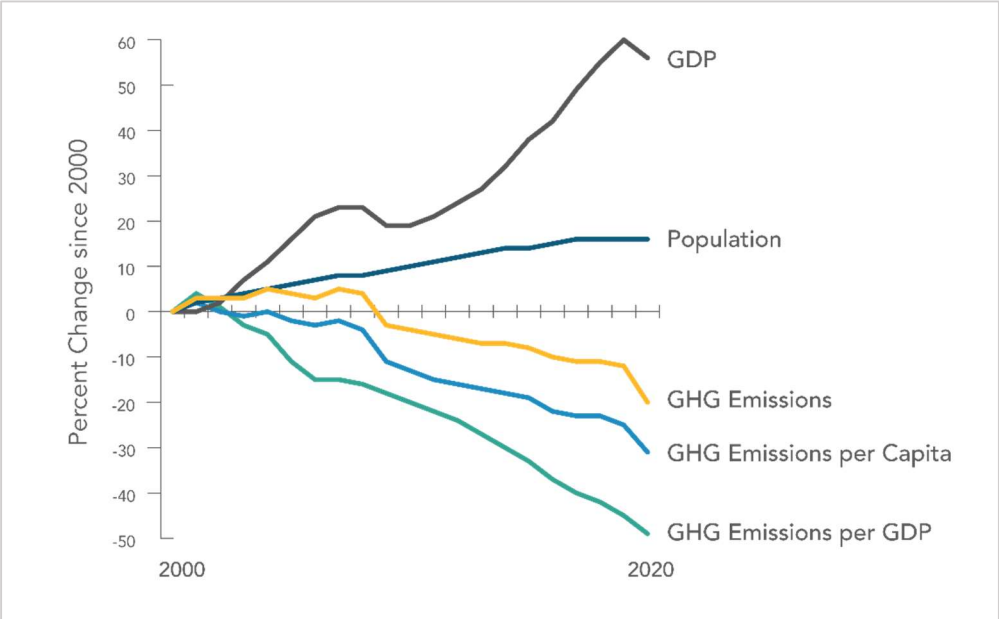
ARB collects GHG emissions data for transportation, electricity, commercial/residential, industrial, agricultural, and waste management sectors each year. It then summarizes and highlights major annual changes and trends to demonstrate the state's progress in meeting its GHG reduction goals. Overall statewide GHG emissions declined from 2000 to 2020 despite growth in population and state economic output (Figure 12) (ARB 2022a).

Figure 12: California 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Economic Sector



(Source: ARB 2022a)

Figure 13: Change in California GDP, Population, and GHG Emissions since 2000



(Source: ARB 2022a)

AB 32 required ARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to update it every 5 years. The AB 32 Scoping Plan and the subsequent updates contain the main strategies California will use to reduce GHG emissions. ARB adopted the first scoping plan in 2008. The second updated plan, California's 2017 Climate Change

Scoping Plan, adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in EO B-30-15 and SB 32. The *2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality,* adopted September 2022, assesses progress toward the statutory 2030 reduction goal and defines a path to reduce human-caused emissions to 85 percent below 1990 levels and achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045, in accordance with AB 1279 (ARB 2022b).

Regional Plans

As required by *The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008*, ARB sets regional GHG reduction targets for California's 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to achieve through planning future projects that will cumulatively achieve those goals, and reporting how they will be met in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle GHG emissions per person from 2005 levels. The proposed project is included in the RTP/SCS for Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The regional reduction target for SCAG is -13% percent by 2035 (ARB 2021)[2].

The proposed project is within the jurisdiction of the SCAG Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA). The SCAG 2020-2045 RTP (Connect SoCal) identifies several measures that address greenhouse gas emissions. They include but are not limited to methods based on design, methods based on planning, and methods based on technology and equipment type. Design methods target emission reduction goals through the implementation of project features, project design, or other measures; incorporating design measures to reduce GHG emissions from solid waste management through encouraging solid waste recycling and reuse; or incorporating design measures to reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewable energy. Planning methods require adopting plans or mitigation programs to reduce emissions as required as part of the Lead Agency's decision. Methods based on technology and equipment type include: incorporating the Best Available Control Technology (BACT) during the design, construction, and operation of projects to minimize GHG emissions; use of energy and fuel-efficient vehicles and equipment; use of the minimum feasible amount of GHG emitting construction materials; and construction of buildings to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified standards. Additionally, another suggested method is to plant shade trees in or near construction projects where feasible.

Connect SoCal's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) summarizes SCAG's GHG reduction approach. The following are the strategies that SCAG has included and quantified to demonstrate the region's ability to meet the targets. The individual studies for each of these elements is available online from SCAG.

- Congestion Pricing
- Express Lane Pricing

[2] https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/sustainable-communities-program/regional-plan-targets

- Improved Bike Infrastructure
- Infill development and increased density near transit infrastructure
- Mileage-Based User Fee
- New Transit Capital Projects
- Shorter trips through land use strategies such as jobs/housing balance
- Transportation Demand Management
- Job Center Parking Strategy (e.g. parking pricing in select centers)
- Bike Share and Micromobility
- Carshare
- Co-working at strategic locations
- Increased Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Electric Vehicle Incentives
- Improved Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Multimodal Dedicated Lanes
- Safe Routes to School
- Transit/TNC Partnership Program
- Increased Average Vehicle Ridership in Job Centers
- Parking Deregulation in certain Priority Growth Areas

These strategies, measures and policies collectively result in approximately 14 percent per-capita GHG reductions using the Activity Based Model, and 5 percent reductions using off-model methodologies. SCAG collaborated with ARB throughout 2018 and 2019 as SCS Program and Evaluation Guidelines were updated by ARB in response to more ambitious per-capita GHG reduction targets. This collaboration was essential to ensuring Connect SoCal's Growth Vision aligns with state expectations. The final technical methodology was submitted to ARB after adoption of Connect SoCal.

SCAG's Program EIR for the 2020 RTP/SCS includes ongoing GHG emission reduction and adaptation strategies in the SCAG region. Climate mitigation strategies include reducing or sequestering GHG emissions, while climate adaptation is preparing for the unavoidable impacts from climate change. Climate mitigation strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting energy efficiency in buildings
- Using low carbon electricity
- Transitioning to high efficiency heating and cooling systems
- Using low carbon and alternative fuels
- Incorporating zero emission or hybrid vehicles
- Incorporating healthy community planning (active transportation)
- Increasing urban density
- Reducing automobile dependence
- Increasing transit options
- Integrating renewable energy
- Improving waste management

Climate adaptation solutions would be long term and require a shift in thinking on how communities are designed. Adaptation strategies include, but are not limited to

- Using scarce water more efficiently
- Adapting building codes to future climate conditions and extreme weather events
- Building flood defenses and raising the levels of levees
- Developing drought tolerant crops
- Implementing urban tree planting and reforestation
- Setting aside land corridors for species migration
- Increasing collaboration on climate preparedness strategies among public agencies.

California is committed to further supporting new research on ways to mitigate climate change and how to understand its ongoing and projected impacts. California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment and Indicators of Change Report will further update our understanding of the many impacts from climate change in a way that directly informs State agencies' efforts to safeguard the State's people, economy, and environment.

Pursuant to its authority under AB 32, CARB has designed and adopted a California Cap-and-Trade Program to reduce GHG emissions from major sources (deemed "covered entities") by setting a firm cap on statewide GHG emissions and employing market mechanisms to achieve AB 32's emission-reduction mandate of returning to 1990 levels of emissions by 2020 (17 CCR Sections 95800 to 96023). Additionally, Executive Order B-32-15 works toward achieving GHG reduction targets with the California Sustainable Freight Action Plan, an integrated plan that establishes clear targets to improve freight efficiency, transition to zero-emission technologies and increase competitiveness of California's freight system.

The State is also taking steps to make the State more resilient to ongoing and projected climate impacts as laid out by the Safeguarding California Plan. The Safeguarding California Plan was updated in 2018 to present new policy recommendations and provide a roadmap of all the actions and next steps that state government is taking to adapt to the ongoing and inevitable effects of climate change. California's continuing efforts are vital steps toward minimizing the impact of GHG emissions and a three-pronged approach of reducing emissions, preparing for impacts, and conducting cutting-edge research can serve as a model for action.

Several transit integration strategies are also presented, which in combination with land use strategies such as Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and providing affordable housing, aim better to link housing, transit, and active transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Other general plans, land use plans, and local climate action plans offer strategies that can be incorporated into specific projects. In addition, many cities and counties in District 7 have adopted Climate Action Plans (CAPs) designed to mitigate GHG emissions and reduce the impacts of climate change on their communities.

Ventura County in April 2010, the County of Ventura General Services Agency (GSA) released an Energy Action Plan to minimize energy intensities in GSA-maintained buildings, improve operational energy and water efficiencies, reduce energy and water

use, pursue LEED and Energy Star certifications, and educate GSA employees. As of April 2012, the County of Ventura released a Climate Protection Plan to reduce GHG emissions by 15 percent by 2020. The six action areas include climate protection leadership, countywide responsibility, facilities, vehicle (fleet) operations, employee commute, and expanded sustainability goals.

Table 7: Regional and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plans

Title	GHG Reduction Policies or Strategies
Connect SoCal (2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy)	SB 375 – GHG Reduction SB 743 – VMT Reduction Performance Outcomes: Location efficiency Mobility and accessibility Safety and public health Environmental quality Economic opportunity Investment effectiveness Transportation system sustainability Environmental Justice
Ventura County 2040 General Plan – Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategy & Climate Action Plan	Table B-10 in Appendix B of the Ventura County 2040 General Plan provides a list of GHG Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Measures. These measures are included but are not limited to the following polices/programs: Land Use and Community Character Circulation, Transportation, and Mobility Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Conservation and Open Space Hazards and Safety Agriculture Water Resources Economic Vitality

PROJECT ANALYSIS

GHG emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation and use of the State Highway System (SHS) (operational emissions) and those produced during construction. The primary GHGs produced by the transportation sector are CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, and HFCs. CO_2 emissions are a product of burning gasoline or diesel fuel in internal combustion engines, along with relatively small amounts of CH_4 and N_2O. A small amount of HFC emissions related to refrigeration is also included in the transportation sector. (GHGs differ in how much heat each traps in the atmosphere, called global warming potential, or GWP. CO_2 is the most important GHG, so amounts of other gases are expressed relative to CO_2, using a metric called “carbon dioxide equivalent”, or CO_2e. The global warming potential of CO_2 is assigned a value of 1, and the GWP of other gases is assessed as multiples of CO_2.)

The CEQA Guidelines generally address greenhouse gas emissions as a cumulative impact due to the global nature of climate change (Pub. Resources Code, § 21083(b)(2)). As the California Supreme Court explained, “because of the global scale of climate change, any one project's contribution is unlikely to be significant by itself.” (Cleveland National Forest Foundation v. San Diego Assn. of Governments (2017) 3 Cal.5th 497, 512.) In assessing cumulative impacts, it must be determined if a project’s incremental effect is “cumulatively considerable” (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130).

To make this determination, the incremental impacts of the project must be compared with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Although climate change is ultimately a cumulative impact, not every individual project that emits greenhouse gases must necessarily be found to contribute to a significant cumulative impact on the environment.

Operational Emissions

This project proposes two Build Alternatives: Alternative A1 to rehabilitate pavement and roadway maintenance activities and Alternative A2 to reduce the number of travel lanes and provide a bike lane in each direction in addition to the scope proposed in Alternative A1. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational GHG emissions. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on SR-33, no increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would occur. Alternative A2 offers an alternate mode of transportation by implementing a bike lane in each direction for approximately 0.67 miles. As a result, the project is not anticipated to result in an increase in operational GHG emissions. While some GHG emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable, no increase in operational GHG emissions is expected.

Under the No-Build Alternative, no action would be taken to improve the existing road condition and the road quality would continue to deteriorate. The No-Build Alternative would cause a decrease in fuel efficiency, as pavement-vehicle tire friction would increase which would then add an increase in operational GHG emissions.

Construction Emissions

Construction GHG emissions would result from material processing and transportation, on-site construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases. While construction GHG emissions are only produced for a short time, they have long-term effects in the atmosphere, so cannot be considered “temporary” in the same way as criteria pollutants that subside after construction is completed.

Use of long-life pavement, traffic management plans, and changes in materials can also help offset GHG emissions produced during construction by allowing longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Based on model runs via CAL-CET2021, the proposed project is anticipated to result in an increase in GHG emissions. This increase in emissions, however, is due to the construction activities, which would last about 530 days. These associated construction activities are considered temporary.

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to air quality. Section 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction, requires contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all ARB emission reduction regulations. Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce GHG emissions.

CEQA Conclusion

While the proposed project will result in GHG emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project will not increase operational GHG emissions.

Alternative A1 would maintain the current configuration of SR-33. Upgraded pavement would also reduce GHG emissions by improving road surface smoothness, which leads to less fuel consumption by vehicles, thereby lowering the emissions produced during driving.

Alternative A2 would implement a road diet, or lane reduction, which can improve safety, calm traffic, and provide better mobility and access for all road users. According to the Policy Brief – Impact of Highway Capacity and Induced Travel on Passenger Vehicle Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions by the California Air Resources Board (September 2014), the reduction of highway vehicle capacity causes a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which may in turn reduce GHG emissions.[3] With the implementation of traffic reduction measures T-1 through T-8 previously mentioned in Section 2.2.2, any potential operational GHG emissions would be minimized to a less than significant level. Therefore, the project is not expected to result in increase in operational GHG emissions and is anticipated to improve motorists' safety while offering an alternate mode of transportation.

The proposed project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. With the implementation of construction GHG reduction measures, the impact would be less than significant.

[3] https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Impact_of_Highway_Capacity_and_Induced_Travel_on_Passenger_Vehicle_Use_and_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Policy_Brief.pdf

Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce GHG emissions. These measures are outlined in the following section.

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Statewide Efforts

In response to Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, California is implementing measures to achieve emission reductions of GHGs that cause climate change. Climate change programs in California are effectively reducing GHG emissions from all sectors of the economy. These programs include regulations, market programs, and incentives that will transform transportation, industry, fuels, and other sectors to take California into a sustainable, cleaner, low-carbon future, while maintaining a robust economy (ARB 2022c).

Major sectors of the California economy, including transportation, will need to reduce emissions to meet 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions targets. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research identified five sustainability pillars in a 2015 report: (1) Increasing the share of renewable energy in the State's energy mix to at least 50 percent by 2030; (2) Reducing petroleum use by up to 50 percent by 2030; (3) Increasing the energy efficiency of existing buildings by 50 percent by 2030; (4) Reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants; and (5) Stewarding natural resources, including forests, working lands, and wetlands, to ensure that they store carbon, are resilient, and enhance other environmental benefits (OPR 2015).

The transportation sector is integral to the people and economy of California. To achieve GHG emission reduction goals, it is vital that the state build on past successes in reducing criteria and toxic air pollutants from transportation and goods movement. GHG emission reductions will come from cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Reducing today's petroleum use in cars and trucks is a key state goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (California Environmental Protection Agency 2015).

In addition, SB 1386 (Wolk 2016) established as state policy the protection and management of natural and working lands and requires state agencies to consider that policy in their own decision making. Trees and vegetation on forests, rangelands, farms, and wetlands remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through biological processes and sequester the carbon in above- and below-ground matter.

Subsequently, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-82-20 to combat the crises in climate change and biodiversity. It instructs state agencies to use existing authorities and resources to identify and implement near- and long-term actions to accelerate natural removal of carbon and build climate resilience in our forests, wetlands, urban greenspaces, agricultural soils, and land conservation activities in ways that serve all communities and in particular low-income, disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities. To support this order, the California Natural Resources Agency released

Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy (California Natural Resources Agency 2022).

Caltrans Activities

Caltrans continues to be involved on the Governor's Climate Action Team as the ARB works to implement EOs S-3-05 and S-01-07 and help achieve the targets set forth in AB 32. EO B-30-15, issued in April 2015, and SB 32 (2016), set an interim target to cut GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The following major initiatives are underway at Caltrans to help meet these targets.

Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

The California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) builds on executive orders signed by Governor Newsom in 2019 and 2020 targeted at reducing GHG emissions in transportation, which account for more than 40 percent of all polluting emissions, to reach the state's climate goals. Under CAPTI, where feasible and within existing funding program structures, the state will invest discretionary transportation funds in sustainable infrastructure projects that align with its climate, health, and social equity goals (California State Transportation Agency 2021).

California Transportation Plan

The California Transportation Plan (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation plan to meet our future mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions. It serves as an umbrella document for all the other statewide transportation planning documents. The CTP 2050 presents a vision of a safe, resilient, and universally accessible transportation system that supports vibrant communities, advances racial and economic justice, and improves public and environmental health. The plan's climate goal is to achieve statewide GHG emissions reduction targets and increase resilience to climate change. It demonstrates how GHG emissions from the transportation sector can be reduced through advancements in clean fuel technologies; continued shifts toward active travel, transit, and shared mobility; more efficient land use and development practices; and continued shifts to telework (Caltrans 2021a).

Caltrans Strategic Plan

The *Caltrans 2020–2024 Strategic Plan* includes goals of stewardship, climate action, and equity. Climate action strategies include developing and implementing a Caltrans Climate Action Plan; a robust program of climate action education, training, and outreach; partnership and collaboration; a VMT monitoring and reduction program; and engaging with the most vulnerable communities in developing and implementing Caltrans climate action activities (Caltrans 2021b).

Caltrans Policy Directives and Other Initiatives

Caltrans Director's Policy 30 (DP-30) Climate Change (June 22, 2012) established a department policy to ensure coordinated efforts to incorporate climate change into

Departmental decisions and activities. *Caltrans Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigation Report* (Caltrans 2020) provides a comprehensive overview of Caltrans' emissions. The report documents and evaluates current Caltrans procedures and activities that track and reduce GHG emissions and identifies additional opportunities for further reducing GHG emissions from Department-controlled emission sources in support of Departmental and State goals.

Project-Level GHG Reduction Strategies

The following measures will also be implemented in the project to reduce GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project.

In addition to the air quality minimization measures (AQ-1 to AQ-13) outlined in the Air Quality Construction Impacts section in Chapter 2, the following GHG reduction measures, taken from the Caltrans GHG Reduction Measures Toolbox (June 2021) shall be implemented as needed to minimize GHG emissions during project construction.

GHG-1: Idling will be limited to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).

GHG-2: Construction truck trips will be scheduled outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.

GHG-3: Caltrans will reduce construction waste by re-using or recycling construction and demolition waste that meets Caltrans standards.

GHG-4: Caltrans will use recycled water for construction to reduce the construction water consumption of potable water.

GHG-5: Caltrans will require the contractor to maintain equipment in proper working condition, use the right size equipment for the job, and use equipment with new technologies to encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment.

GHG-6: Reduce the need to transport earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.

ADAPTATION

Reducing GHG emissions is only one part of an approach to addressing climate change. Caltrans must plan for the effects of climate change on the state's transportation infrastructure and strengthen or protect the facilities from damage. Climate change is expected to produce increased variability in precipitation, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, variability in storm surges and their intensity, and in the frequency and intensity of wildfires. Flooding and erosion can damage or wash out roads; longer periods of intense heat can buckle pavement and railroad tracks; storm surges combined with a rising sea level can inundate highways. Wildfire can directly burn facilities and indirectly cause damage when rain falls on denuded slopes that

landslide after a fire. Effects will vary by location and may, in the most extreme cases, require that a facility be relocated or redesigned. Accordingly, Caltrans must consider these types of climate stressors in how highways are planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained.

Federal Efforts

Under NEPA Assignment, Caltrans is obligated to comply with all applicable federal environmental laws and FHWA NEPA regulations, policies, and guidance. Caltrans practices generally align with the 2023 CEQ interim Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change, which offers recommendations for additional ways of evaluating project effects related to GHG emissions and climate change. These recommendations are not regulatory requirements.

The *Fifth National Climate Assessment*, published in 2023, presents the most recent science and "analyzes the effects of global change on the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, human social systems, and biological diversity; [It] analyzes current trends in global change, both human-induced and natural, and projects major trends for the subsequent 25 to 100 years … to support informed decision-making across the United States." Building on previous assessments, it continues to advance "an inclusive, diverse, and sustained process for assessing and communicating scientific knowledge on the impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities associated with a changing global climate" (U.S. Global Change Research Program 2023).

The U.S. Department of Transportation recognizes the transportation sector's major contribution of GHGs that cause climate change and has made climate action one of the department's top priorities (U.S. DOT 2023). FHWA's policy is to strive to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events to current and planned transportation systems. FHWA has developed guidance and tools for transportation planning that fosters resilience to climate effects and sustainability at the federal, state, and local levels (FHWA 2022).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides sea level rise projections for all U.S. coastal waters to help communities and decision makers assess their risk from sea level rise. Updated projections through 2150 were released in 2022 in a report and online tool (NOAA 2022).

State Efforts

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system. A number of state policies and tools have been developed to guide adaptation efforts.

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment (Fourth Assessment) (2018) provides information to help decision makers across sectors and at state, regional, and local scales protect and build the resilience of the state's people, infrastructure, natural systems, working lands, and waters. The Fourth Assessment reported that if no

measures are taken to reduce GHG emissions by 2021 or sooner, the state is projected to experience an up to 8.8 degrees Fahrenheit increase in average annual maximum daily temperatures; a two-thirds decline in water supply from snowpack resulting in water shortages; a 77% increase in average area burned by wildfire; and large-scale erosion of up to 67% of Southern California beaches due to sea level rise. These effects will have profound impacts on infrastructure, agriculture, energy demand, natural systems, communities, and public health (State of California 2018).

Sea level rise is a particular concern for transportation infrastructure in the coastal zone. Major urban airports will be at risk of flooding from sea level rise combined with storm surge as early as 2040; San Francisco airport is already at risk. Miles of coastal highways vulnerable to flooding in a 100-year storm event will triple to 370 by 2100, and 3,750 miles will be exposed to temporary flooding. The Fourth Assessment's findings highlight the need for proactive action to address these current and future impacts of climate change.

To help actors throughout the state address the findings of California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, AB 2800's multidisciplinary Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group published *Paying it Forward: The Path Toward Climate-Safe Infrastructure in California*. This report provides guidance on assessing risk in the face of inherent uncertainties still posed by the best available climate change science. It also examines how state agencies can use infrastructure planning, design, and implementation processes to respond to the observed and anticipated climate change impacts (Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group 2018).

EO S-13-08, issued in 2008, directed state agencies to consider sea level rise scenarios for 2050 and 2100 during planning to assess project vulnerabilities, reduce risks, and increase resilience to sea level rise. It gave rise to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, the Safeguarding California Plan, and a series of technical reports on statewide sea level rise projections and risks, including the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Update* in 2018. The reports addressed the full range of climate change impacts and recommended adaptation strategies. The current *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* incorporates key elements of the latest sector-specific plans such as the *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy*, *Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan*, *Water Resilience Portfolio,* and the CAPTI (described above). Priorities in the 2023 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* include acting in partnership with California Native American Tribes, strengthening protections for climate-vulnerable communities that lack capacity and resources, implementing nature-based climate solutions, using best available climate science, and partnering and collaboration to best leverage resources (California Natural Resources Agency 2023).

EO B-30-15 recognizes that effects of climate change threaten California's infrastructure and requires state agencies to factor climate change into all planning and investment decisions. Under this EO, the Office of Planning and Research published *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies*, to encourage a uniform and systematic approach to building resilience.

SB 1 Coastal Resources: Sea Level Rise (Atkins 2021) established statewide goals to "anticipate, assess, plan for, and, to the extent feasible, avoid, minimize, and mitigate the adverse environmental and economic effects of sea level rise within the coastal zone." As the legislation directed, the Ocean Protection Council collaborated with 17 state planning and coastal management agencies to develop the *State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan for California* in February 2022. This plan promotes coordinated actions by state agencies to enhance California's resilience to the impacts of sea level rise (California Ocean Protection Council 2022).

Caltrans Adaptation Efforts

CALTRANS VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Caltrans completed climate change vulnerability assessments to identify segments of the State Highway System vulnerable to climate change effects of precipitation, temperature, wildfire, storm surge, and sea level rise.

The climate change data in the assessments were developed in coordination with climate change scientists and experts at federal, state, and regional organizations at the forefront of climate science. The findings of the vulnerability assessments guide the analysis of at-risk assets and the development of Adaptation Priority Reports as a method to make capital programming decisions to address identified risks.

Caltrans Sustainability Programs

The Director's Office of Equity, Sustainability and Tribal Affairs supports implementation of sustainable practices at Caltrans. The *Sustainability Roadmap* is a periodic progress report and plan for meeting the Governor's sustainability goals related to EOs B-16-12, B-18-12, and B-30-15. The Roadmap includes designing new buildings for climate change resilience and zero-net energy, and replacing fleet vehicles with zero-emission vehicles (Caltrans 2023).

Project Adaptation Analysis

It is possible that the proposed project will be subject to climate change effects. The proposed project is not located near the seacoast or within a regulatory floodway; however, it may be susceptible to wildfire. Recognizing these concerns, it is important to determine whether the project will exacerbate the effects of climate change relating to these topics, which are elaborated upon in the following sections: Floodplains and Wildfire.

Caltrans District 7 completed a climate change vulnerability assessment in September 2019 for Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. It provides a high-level review of potential climate impacts on the State Highway System in District 7 based on a database containing climate stressor geospatial data that was developed as part of the study.

Climate change risk analysis involves uncertainties as to the timing and intensity of potential risks, but some general climate trends are expected in California and the

western U.S. More severe droughts, less snowpack, and changes in water availability are anticipated, and rising sea levels, more severe storm impacts, and coastal erosion can be expected. Increased temperatures, more frequent, longer heat waves, and longer and more severe wildfire seasons are predicted.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research prepared *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*, a guidebook for state agencies performing climate risk analyses to determine how to integrate climate considerations into planning or investment decisions.

The first step is to identify how climate change could affect a project or plan by identifying impacts of concern and assessing the scale, scope, and context of climate disruption. Next, a climate risk analysis can be conducted by selecting climate change scenarios for analysis and selecting an analytical approach. Following that, a climate-informed decision can be made by evaluating the alternatives and design and applying resilient decision principles. Finally, the agency can track and monitor progress by evaluating determined metrics and adjusting as needed. This study will go through the first two steps to inform a decision for the proposed project.

Assessing the scale, scope, and context of climate disruption for this project means considering the timeframe/lifetime, adaptive capacity, and risk tolerance of the project areas. The guidebook states, "If the expected lifetime of a project is less than five years, it may not be necessary to integrate longer-term climate change into the design and analysis." The completed project is expected to last far longer than five years, so the impacts of extreme events should be considered to ensure that planning and investment decisions reflect the current climate conditions. In the following sections, extreme impacts of climate change-based sea-level rise, flooding, and wildfire will be considered. Other extreme weather impacts, such as drought and extreme heat, are also anticipated as changing climate conditions, but this study will focus on conditions that could potentially affect the project and its proposed structures.

Climate risk is characterized by asking a few key questions, focusing on the scale and scope of the risk, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity of the affected area, the nature of the risk, and the economic impacts.

Question 1: How severe are the consequences if your project or plan is disrupted by an extreme event or changes in average conditions?

If the construction of the project is disrupted by an extreme event, schedule delays and delays to traffic and emergency services would likely occur. Increased construction costs are also expected. Economic implications will be addressed in Question 4, and based on the severity, this would be a moderate impact. It is not unacceptable and is not likely to ultimately affect the completion of the project, but it would be an inconvenience and require additional planning and coordination, along with extra work to repair the damage done by an extreme condition. Preserving and improving structural integrity will help to increase the resilience of the highway to climate change.

The impact of average conditions disrupting the project or plan depends on the severity of these changes. Assuming the average changes are small or even negligible during the timeframe of project construction and completion by 2026, there would be low or no impact on design, planning, and construction.

Question 2: Who or what will be affected by the disruption of the project or plan?

Disruption of the project will affect the local community and state highway users in the long term by delaying construction, but not in the immediate short term. If disruption occurs during construction, construction workers would also be affected. With communication and emergency planning in place, the impact would be low to moderate; communities, systems, and infrastructure should be readily able to adapt or respond to any changes. Detours or other transportation methods could be arranged for the community. Coordination with California Highway Patrol, Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), and the County of Ventura will be conducted in the event that a disruption occurs.

Question 3: What is the nature of this disruption?

Schedule delay and access would be the primary concern if the project is disrupted; however, it is expected that any disruption by climate change effects would not be permanent. Use of the highway or construction of the project would be able to continue; therefore, the nature of this disruption is temporary. Future flexibility would be maintained, and Caltrans and drivers would be readily able to respond or adapt.

Question 4: What are the economic implications of climate disruption?

As stated in the response to Question 1, schedule delays, delays to traffic and emergency services, and increased construction costs would be expected as a result of climate disruption. The local community may also have trouble getting to work or accessing local businesses such as shopping centers. These economic implications could potentially be large, depending on the extent and type of disruption. It is unlikely that the costs of disruption or response to the disruption would be unacceptably high. Such costs are between low to medium cost.

Figure 14: Mapping Risk Characteristics to Analytical Approaches

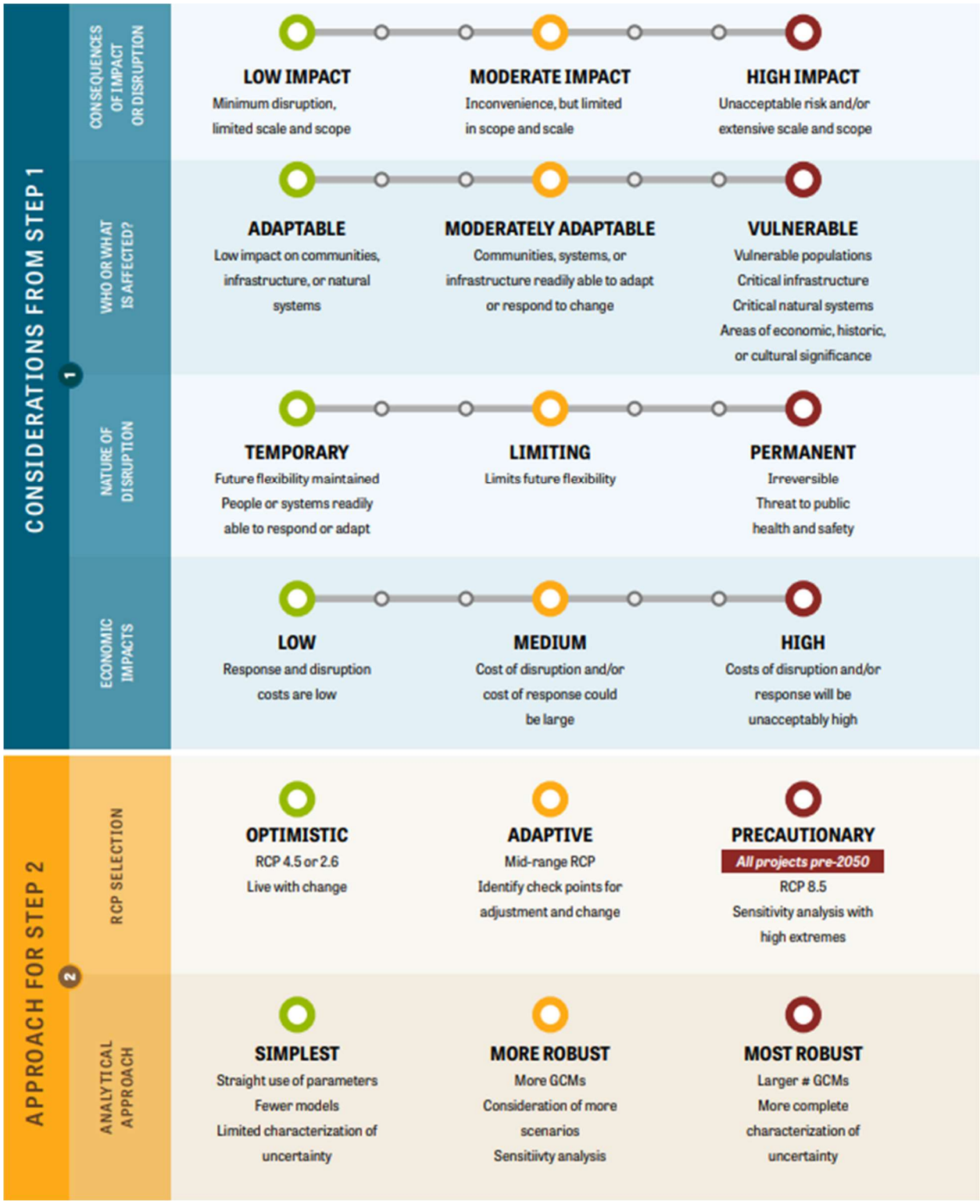


Figure 14 ***above*** (from Figure 2 in *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*) matches the answers from the four questions with characteristics of analytical approaches and climate scenarios. For this analysis, because most answers were low or low-moderate, an optimistic RCP is selected, and a simple approach is used.

The proposed project is not expected to exacerbate any of the risks discussed above. Though the risks inherent to climate change already in progress are considered, the project would not contribute to the acceleration or increase of any such dangers in any significant way. It would not alter the highway's relation to the surrounding environment significantly, and it would not cause any significant change to the environment that would allow for increased or greater danger in the future.

SEA LEVEL RISE

The proposed project is outside the coastal zone and not in an area subject to sea-level rise. Accordingly, direct impacts on transportation facilities due to projected sea-level rise are not expected.

PRECIPITATION AND FLOODING

The project location is within the Ventura River Watershed, which encompasses 226 square miles. Two major streams are San Antonio Creek, which crosses Route 33, and the Ventura River. There appear to be no risks associated with the project, which would not result in a significant encroachment in the 100-year floodplain. There is no change in the floodplain land usage distribution for commercial or residential areas. The total runoff of the streams remains the same for a 100-year storm event. The floodplain adheres to the zoning laws in its development. The development thus far suggests that there is no incompatibility in the floodplain that will adversely affect the SR-33 Roadway Preservation project.

It has been noted by residents that some areas of the SR-33 roadway experience flooding during heavy rain events. These locations will be further evaluated in the Design phase and will be addressed if necessary. If these flooding locations are outside of Caltrans right-of-way, the County of Ventura shall be notified of the problem areas.

Wildfire

As previously mentioned in Section 3.3, it is expected that longer and more severe wildfire seasons will occur across California. The proposed project lies in an area mapped by CalFire as a Moderate Fire Hazard Safety Zone and Local Responsibility Area. Caltrans District 7 has mapped this portion of SR-33 as an Exposed Roadway and a medium level of concern in its models of future impacts of wildfire on state infrastructure. The proposed project aims to upgrade an existing facility and will not create new facilities within areas susceptible to wildfire hazards.

TEMPERATURE

The District Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment does not indicate temperature changes during the project's design life that would require adaptive changes in pavement design or maintenance practices.

Chapter 4 Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is essential to the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency, tribal consultation, and public participation in this project have been accomplished through various formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team (PDT) meetings and early coordination with relevant stakeholders. This chapter summarizes the results-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

Scoping

The following section is summarized from the Scoping Summary Report (August 2023).

The CEQ NEPA Regulations (40 CFR Part 1500 *et seq*.) and the *CEQA Guidelines* (Sections15082-15083) recommend that federal, state, and local lead agencies use a public scoping process to help identify the various issues to be addressed in the environmental document. Early scoping allows public agencies and the general public to learn about the proposed project and to submit suggestions regarding alternatives and the types of impacts to be evaluated.

Notice of Initiation of Studies

Notices of Initiation of Studies letters (Figures 15 and 16) were sent to relevant public agencies, organizations, elected officials, Native American tribal contacts, and other interested individuals on February 27, 2023, as part of the scoping process. Approximately 1,800 property owners within the project area were notified by mail as part of the project. These communities were in the unincorporated communities of Casitas Springs, Oak View, and Mira Monte in the County of Ventura. Another 100 letters were sent via U.S. mail to public agencies, special interest groups, elected officials, and Native American tribes. This letter notified members of the public about the project, the date of a public meeting, and the deadline to submit comments. Newspaper ads were also published in La Opinion, OV News, and VC Star on February 27, 2023. A Caltrans News Release, Twitter, and Facebook were released on March 6, 2023.

Notices were sent out on February 27, 2023, and comments from the public were accepted until April 12, 2023.

Figure 15: Notice of Initiation of Studies to General Public

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 7
100 SOUTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 100 | LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
PHONE (213) 897-0362 | FAX (213) 897-0360 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

2/27/2023

Agencies, Individuals, and Organizations
Interested in SR-33 Pavement Preservation Project

Notice of Initiation of Studies for SR-33 Pavement Preservation Project

This notice is to inform you that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is formally initiating studies for a pavement preservation project on State Route 33 (SR-33) between 0.6 mile south of Parkview Drive to 0.1 mile north of Foothill Trail at Post Miles (PM) 6.3 to 13.49, in Ventura County. The purpose of this project is to preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement, improve multi-modal mobility, ride quality, and safety by providing a better access for bicyclists, pedestrian, and transit users.

The project includes three alternatives:

Build Alternative A1
The Build Alternative A1 scope of work includes upgrading the existing asphalt pavement, curb ramps, traffic signals, crosswalks, as well as upgrading the Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) to Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) at (PM 6.30/13.49). The project also proposes constructing new sidewalks, installing American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Pedestrian Infrastructure, bus pads with shelters, and pedestrian crossings.

Build Alternative A2
The Build Alternative A2 includes the scope of work in Alternative A1 in addition, to reconfiguring travel lanes from Santa Ana Blvd to Larmier Ave (between PM 8.0 & PM 9.1). The travel lanes will be reconfigured from 5 lanes to 3 lanes, with 1 through lane in each direction divided by two-way left turn lane, 8 feet parking and bike lanes at both side of the road. This alternative will also provide a raised median, landscaping, and curb extensions throughout project limit where feasible.

No Build Alternative B
The No-Build Alternative would not have changes made to the existing facility. No action would be taken to improve the existing road condition and the road quality would continue to deteriorate.

A demonstration project will be implemented in late spring or early summer of 2023 in Ventura County on SR-33 (from Creek Road to La Cross Street) within the Oak View community from PM 8.0 to PM 9.1. The proposed project will restripe the existing travel lanes into 1 through lane in each direction of SR-33 between PM 8.0 to PM-9.1. The

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

purpose of the project is to temporarily test the proposed concept of the new lane configuration as part of a larger project. The demonstration project can be modified as needed until the set goals are achieved. The follow-up study will determine impact on traffic, other roadway users, and surrounding businesses. The demonstration project is expected to last for a period of six months.

Based on the current scope, it is anticipated that an Initial Study will be prepared to evaluate the anticipated environmental impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an Environmental Assessment will be prepared to evaluate the anticipated environmental effects pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

A public scoping meeting to provide information and gather public input about the proposed project will be held at the following location:

LOCATION
March 16, 2023, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
Oak View Park & Resource Center
555 Mahoney Avenue
Oak View, CA 93022

If you cannot attend in person, please join at: **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87464703946** to access the Webinar. If connecting from a computer the user does not need the ID, but if connecting by phone ID is: **Webinar ID: 874 6470 3946 ID**

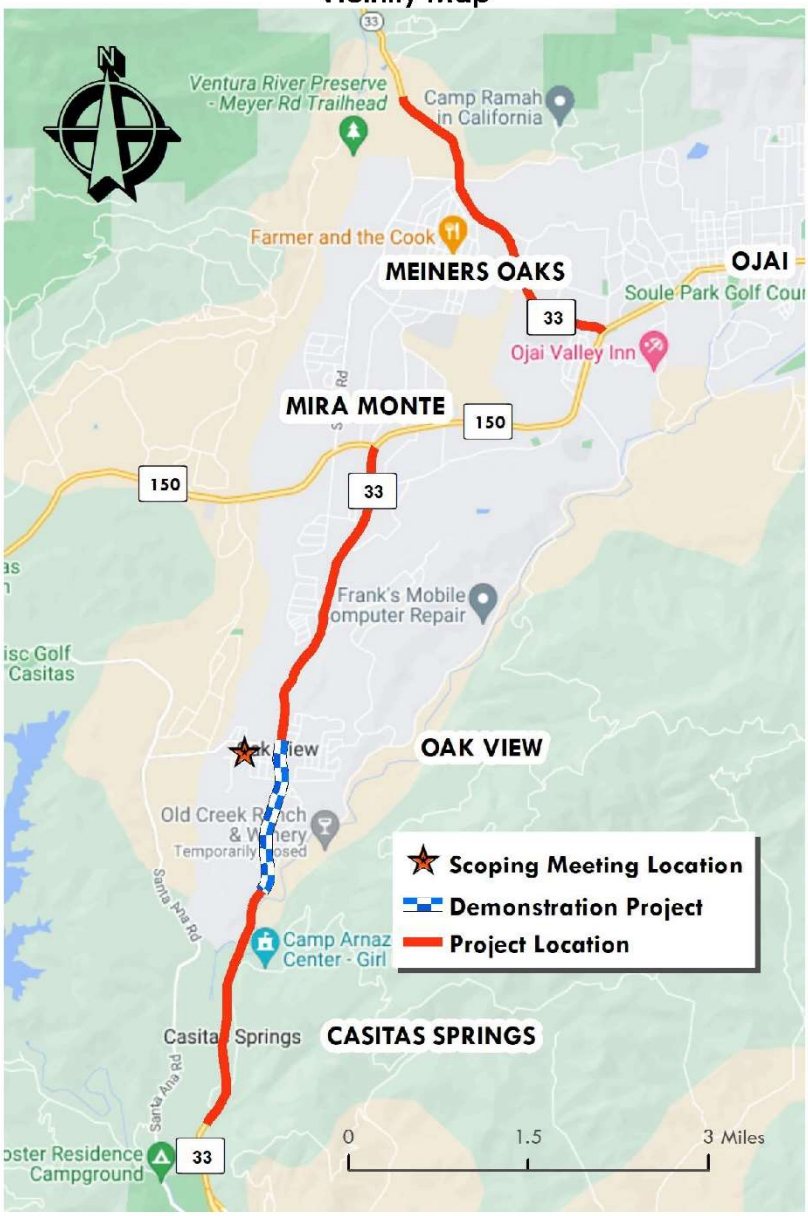
Additional information can be found at the project website by accessing the QR code below or at (https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7/sr33-pavement-preservation-project). Please submit your comments and questions to GoOakview@dot.ca.gov. Thank you for your interest in this important study.

Sincerely,

GARRETT DAMRATH,
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation District 7

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Vicinity Map



"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Figure 16: Notice of Initiation of Studies to Elected Officials

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 7
100 SOUTH MAIN STREET, SUITE 100 | LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
PHONE (213) 897-0362 | FAX (213) 897-0360 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

02/27/2023

The Honorable Julia Brownley
U.S. Congress
300 E. Esplanade Dr. Suite 209B
Oxnard, CA 93036

Notice of Initiation of Studies for SR-33 Pavement Preservation Project

This notice is to inform you that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is formally initiating studies for a pavement preservation project on State Route 33 (SR-33) between 0.6 mile south of Parkview Drive to 0.1 mile north of Foothill Trail at Post Miles (PM) 6.3 to 13.49, in Ventura County. The purpose of this project is to preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement, improve multi-modal mobility, ride quality, and safety by providing a better access for bicyclists, pedestrian, and transit users.

The project includes three alternatives:

Build Alternative A1
The Build Alternative A1 scope of work includes upgrading the existing asphalt pavement, curb ramps, traffic signals, crosswalks, as well as upgrading the Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) to Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) at (PM 6.30/13.49). The project also proposes constructing new sidewalks, installing American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Pedestrian Infrastructure, bus pads with shelters, and pedestrian crossings.

Build Alternative A2
The Build Alternative A2 includes the scope of work in Alternative A1 in addition, to reconfiguring travel lanes from Santa Ana Blvd to Larmier Ave (between PM 8.0 & PM 9.1). The travel lanes will be reconfigured from 5 lanes to 3 lanes, with 1 through lane in each direction divided by two-way left turn lane, 8 feet parking and bike lanes at both sides of the road. This alternative will also provide a raised median, landscaping, and curb extensions throughout project limit where feasible.

No Build Alternative B
The No-Build Alternative would not have changes made to the existing facility. No action would be taken to improve the existing road condition and the road quality would continue to deteriorate.

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A demonstration project will be implemented in late spring or early summer of 2023 in Ventura County on SR-33 (from Creek Road to La Cross Street) within the Oak View community from PM 8.0 to PM 9.1. The proposed project will restripe the existing travel lanes into 1 through lane in each direction of SR-33 between PM 8.0 to PM-9.1. The purpose of the project is to temporarily test the proposed concept of the new lane configuration as part of a larger project. The demonstration project can be modified as needed until the set goals are achieved. The follow-up study will determine impact on traffic, other roadway users, and surrounding businesses. The demonstration project is expected to last for a period of six months.

Based on the current scope, it is anticipated that an Initial Study will be prepared to evaluate the anticipated environmental impacts pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an Environmental Assessment will be prepared to evaluate the anticipated environmental effects pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

A public scoping meeting to provide information and gather public input about the proposed project will be held at the following location:

LOCATION
March 16, 2023, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
Oak View Park & Resource Center
555 Mahoney Avenue
Oak View, CA 93022

If you cannot attend in person, please join at: **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87464703946** to the Webinar. If connecting from a computer the user does not need the ID, but if connecting by phone ID is: **Webinar ID: 874 6470 3946 ID**

Additional information can be found at the project website by accessing the QR code below or at (https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-7/sr33-pavement-preservation-project). Please submit your comments and questions to GoOakview@dot.ca.gov. Thank you for your interest in this important study.

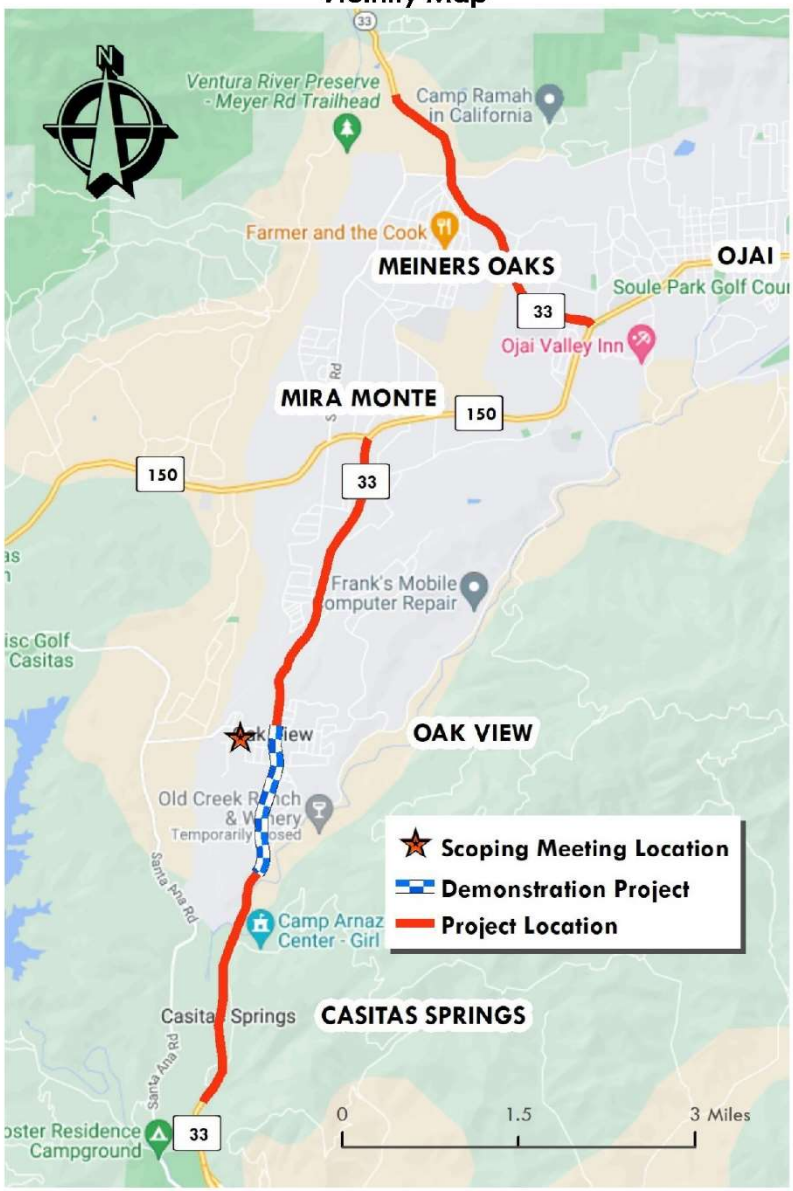
Sincerely,

Gloria Roberts (Feb 22, 2023 09:21 PST)

GLORIA ROBERTS
District Director (Acting)
California Department of Transportation District 7

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Vicinity Map



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Scoping Meeting

A public meeting was held on Thursday, March 16, 2023, at Oak View Park & Resource Center on 555 Mahoney Avenue, Oak View, CA 93022, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The format of the scoping meeting consisted of an open house with displays, a PowerPoint presentation, and a breakout session with Caltrans specialists.

One hundred and fourteen (114) people attended the scoping meeting in person, and one hundred and sixteen (116) people attended via Zoom webinar. Upon arrival, participants were encouraged to sign in, pick up informational materials, review the public meeting agenda, visit various project posters, and talk with Caltrans staff. Participants were provided a comment card to make comments. Spanish translators were readily available if needed.

Scoping Comments

Four methods were used to collect public comments; comment cards collected at the public scoping meeting, the online survey, mail, and project email. The number of comments and types are as follows:

Scoping Meeting Comment Cards	52
Project Email	38
Website Survey	95
Mail	1

Scoping comments were received through U.S. mail and through the project e-mail (GoOakview@dot.ca.gov) during the scoping period (February 27, 2023, to April 12, 2023) and via written comments at the public scoping meeting on March 16, 2023. Since Project Scoping, the GoOakview email has remained open to obtain public feedback regarding the demonstration project. All comments have been received by the Project Development Team and will be considered for the project design in the future Design phase.

Summary of Comments Received

Community comments were compiled and reviewed from the in-person public scoping meeting, written in-person comments, online survey, mail, and project email. A list of primary concerns identified by the community regarding the proposed project are listed as follows:

- Potential increased traffic congestion diverting traffic to local streets.
- Potential increased accident rate.
- Decreased emergency vehicle accessibility.
- Safety concerns from adding a left turn lane.
- No need for additional parking.
- Change to community character.

In general, the majority of comments were supportive in favor of a bike lane, reducing speed, better sidewalks, and safer pedestrian crossing.

Traffic Analysis – Emergency Responders Meeting

In addition to the comprehensive traffic operations analysis of the pre and post demonstration project conditions, a meeting was held with several emergency responders within the study area on June 17, 2024, to gain an understanding of any potential impacts that may be associated with the geometric changes associated with the demonstration project and the proposed project. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Ventura County Fire Department, Ventura County Emergency Medical Services, American Medical Response (AMR) Ambulance, and Caltrans.

Key items that were raised at the review meeting include:

- Concern with features in the median/raised median. Currently, with the painted cycle lanes (demonstration project), some people may not know that they can pull into the bike lane when emergency responders are coming through. It would be problematic for emergency response if vehicles are not able to pull to the right.
- Other potential impacts or observations that were raised during the meeting include:
    - Ojai Valley only has four roads in – all are two lanes in/out. It is noted that several businesses operate from the SR-33 roadway. The four lanes allow for local traffic to make a turn into the businesses.
    - There are two S curves (on SR-33) approaching Larmier Ave. – people will have to hit the brakes as they get to the light and need to merge, so traffic collisions may occur due to this maneuver. Post meeting note – the merging configuration will be modified and addressed during the final design of the bike lanes.
    - Fire Station 23 is more difficult to get in/out of now that the highway is down to a single lane in each direction.
    - Structure fires – Fire trucks will come from Ventura County, and these vehicles are heavier. There could be more delay if drivers do not know which way to pull over.
    - Center island with curb/raised median is not recommended.

Future Outreach Efforts

Circulation of this IS/EA environmental document will mark the beginning of further outreach to elected officials, governmental agencies, local stakeholders, and other interested and potentially affected parties – reference Chapter 6 of this environmental document (Distribution List) for a complete listing. Ongoing public outreach will also continue in future phases of the project, including the Design and Construction phases.

Chapter 5 List of Preparers

Mojgan Abbassi, **Environmental Scientist**

Susan Tse-Koo, **Senior Environmental Scientist**

Christopher Laurel, **Environmental Scientist**

Lillian Cai, **Environmental Scientist**

Joben Penuliar, **Environmental Planner**

Hannah Tram, **Volunteer Intern**

Kimberly Harrison, **Archaeologist**

Claudia Harbert, **Senior Cultural Specialist**

Mario Mariotta, **Biologist**

Paul Caron, **Senior Biologist**

Samia Soueidan, **Noise Specialist**

Jin Lee, **Senior Noise Specialist**

Stewart Fong, **Hazardous Waste Specialist**

Andrew Yoon, **Senior Air Quality Specialist**

Donny Thai, **Landscape Architect**

Keith Sellers, **Senior Landscape Architect**

Joseph Kibe, **Project Manager**

Celeste Solano, **Project Engineer**

Md Alam, **Senior Transportation Engineer**

Rick Komisarki, **Graphic Designer III**

Benjamin Roxton, **Staff Services Manger I**

James Medina, **Information Officer I**

Chapter 6 Distribution List

The Draft IS/EA or a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be distributed to elected officials, local and regional agencies, utility providers, and other interested groups, organizations, and individuals affected by the project. To minimize the size of this document, a list of property owners/residents/business owners included in the NOA distribution is appended separately. A complete list of property owners/residents/business owners included in the NOA distribution can be provided upon request by emailing GoOakview@dot.ca.gov.

6.1 Elected Officials

Federal

The Honorable Laphonza Butler
U.S. Senator
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C., 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
U.S. Senator
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C., 20510

The Honorable Julia Brownley
Representative in Congress District 26
201 East Fourth St, Suite 209B
Oxnard, CA 93030

The Honorable Salud Carbajal
Representative in Congress District 24
125 E De La Gerra Site 203B
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

State

The Honorable Monique Limon
California Senator District 19
300 E. Esplanade Dr. Suite 430
Oxnard, CA 93036

The Honorable Steve Bennett
State Assembly Member District 38
89 S. California Street, Ste F
Ventura, CA 93001

The Honorable Scott Wilk
California Senator District 21
23920 Valencia Blvd, Suite 250
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

The Honorable Gregg Hart
State Assembly Member District 37
101 West Anapamu Street, Suite A
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

County of Ventura

The Honorable Matt LeVere
County of Ventura District 1 Supervisor
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

The Honorable Michelle Ascencion
Ventura County Clerk-Recorder
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

City of Ojai

The Honorable Betsy Stix
City of Ojai Mayor
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

The Honorable Andrew Whitman
City of Ojai Mayor Pro Tempore
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

The Honorable Leslie Rule
City of Ojai District 1 Council Member
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

The Honorable Rachel Lang
City of Ojai District 2 Council Member
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

The Honorable Suza Francina
City of Ojai District 4 Council Member
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

Ben Harvey
City of Ojai City Manager
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

Cynthia Burell
City of Ojai Clerk
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

Lucas Seibert
City of Ojai Community Development Director
401 S. Ventura St.
Ojai, CA 93023

The Honorable Dr. Sherrill Knox
Ojai Unified School District Superintendent
414 E. Ojai Ave.
Ojai, CA 93023

The Honorable Dr. Atticus Reyes
Ojai Unified School District Board President
414 E. Ojai Ave.
Ojai, CA 93023

6.2 Public Agencies

Federal Agencies

Stephen P. Henry
Field Supervisor, Ventura Field Office
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
2493 Portola Rd., Suite B
Ventura, CA 93003

Robert J. Fenton
Region 9 Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
1111 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94607

Thomas J. Vilsack
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
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Washington, D.C. 20250

Elissa Konove
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
California Division
888 S. Figueroa St., Suite 440
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Stephen G. Tryon
Director
Department of the Interior
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
1849 “C” Street, NW, MS 2462
Washington, D.C. 20240

Candice Robertson
Senior Advisor, Office of Environmental Management
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Veronica Garza
Land and Special Use Officer
Los Padres National Forest
3505 Paradise Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

State Agencies

California Highway Patrol
CHP 765 Ventura
4656 Valentine Rd.
Ventura, CA 93003

California State
Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Governor's Office of Planning
and Research
Environment Review
1400 Tenth St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Drew Bohan
Executive Director
California Energy
Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Board Chair
California State Air
Resources Board
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Sacramento, CA 95812

Joshua Eddy
Executive Director
California Department of
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Sacramento, CA 95814

Stacy St. James
South Central Coastal
Information Center
Coordinator
California Office of Historic
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P.O. Box 6846
Fullerton, CA 92834

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California Public Utilities
Commission
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San Francisco, CA 94102

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California State University
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Long Beach, CA 90802

Yana Garcia
Secretary for Environmental
Protection
California Environmental
Protection Agency
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Sacramento, CA 95812

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Los Angeles Field Office
Director
Department of Housing and
Urban Development
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4054
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Chair
California Water Quality
Control Board
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Los Angeles, CA 90013

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Camarillo, CA 93010

Chad Cook
Deputy Chief
Ventura County Fire
Department
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Camarillo, CA 93010

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Headquarters Commander
Ventura County Sheriff's
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Ventura, CA 93009

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Planning Director
Ventura County Resource
Management Agency
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

Susan Curtis
Assistant Planning Director
Ventura County Resource
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800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

Winston Wright
Permit Administrator
Ventura County Resource
Management Agency
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

Gregg Strakaluse
Director
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Ventura, CA 93009

David Fleisch
Assistant Agency Director
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Ventura, CA 93009

Anitha Balan
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Ventura County Public Works
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

Jim Fryhoff
Sheriff
Ventura County Sheriff's Office
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Ventura, CA 93009

Jim Finch
Board Member
Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency
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Ojai, CA 93024

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Vice Presidents
EJ Harrison & Sons
P.O. Box 4009
Ventura, CA 93007

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General Manager
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Ojai, CA 93023

Mike Etchart
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Meiners Oaks Water District
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Ojai, CA 93023

Mary Bergen
Director, Division 4
Casitas Mutual Water Company
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Oak View, CA 93022

Southern California Edison
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Rosemead, CA 91770

Pacific Bell Telephone Company
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San Francisco, CA 94105

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City of Ojai Department of Public Works
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Ojai, CA 93023

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City of Ojai Department of Recreation
510 Park Rd.
Ojai, CA 93024

Trina Newman
Police Chief
Ojai Police Department
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Ojai, CA 93023

6.3 Interested Groups, Organizations, and Individuals

Katie Davis
Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapter Chair
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 31241
Santa Barbara, CA 93130

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Girl Scouts of America, Camp Arnaz
155 Sulphur Mountain Rd.
Ventura, CA 93001

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Ojai Valley Green Coalition
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Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
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Ojai, CA 93024

Sandy Buechley
Vice President
Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
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Ojai, CA 93024

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Ventura, CA 93001

Larry Abele
Chair
Bike Ventura County
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Ventura, CA 93001

Mirta Millares
President
Channel Islands Bicycle Club
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Ventura, CA 93002

Kate Faulkner
Caltrans "Adopt-a-Bike Path" Coordinator
Channel Islands Bicycle Club
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Ventura, CA 93002

Sheri Leiken
President
Conejo Valley Cyclists
567 Tree Top Lane
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

The Old Kranks Bicycle Club
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Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Serious Cycling
29041 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

John Ferro
President
Ventura County Motorcycle Club
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Oxnard, CA 93010

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California Native Plant Society
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Natural Resources Conservation Services
California Land Conservation Assistance Network
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Oxnard, CA 93035

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Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce
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Ojai, CA 93023

Stephanie Caldwell
President & CEO
Ventura Chamber of Commerce
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Ventura, CA 93002

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Executive Director
Los Padres Forest Watch
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Santa Barbara, CA 93102

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Ojai, CA 93023

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Ron Solorzano
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Jodi Grass
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Oak Grove School
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Ojai, CA 93023

Shawna Garritson
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Alexandra Mejia-Holdsworth
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Katherine White
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Mira Monte Elementary School
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Ojai, CA 93023

Tomas Gaeta
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Vincent Serrano
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Ventura, CA 93004

Chad Bowie
Parks Operations
Ventura County Parks Department
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Oak View Park and Resources Center
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Oak View, CA 93022

Megan Telfer
Co-Executive Director
Help of Ojai
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Ojai, CA 93023

Matthew Vestuto
Chair
Barbareños/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians
P.O. Box 364
Ojai, CA 93024

Appendix A Title VI/Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS–49 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273–0001
(916) 654-6130 | FAX (916) 653-5776 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

September 2022

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures "*No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.*"

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 639-6392 or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 879-6768 (TTY 711); or at Title.VI@dot.ca.gov.

TONY TAVARES
Director

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

Appendix B Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

In order to be sure that all of the environmental measures identified in this document are executed at the appropriate times, the following mitigation program (as articulated on the proposed Environmental Commitments Record [ECR] which follows) would be implemented. During project design, avoidance, minimization, and /or mitigation measures will be incorporated into the project's final plans, specifications, and cost estimates, as appropriate. All permits will be obtained prior to implementation of the project. During construction, environmental and construction/engineering staff will ensure that the commitments contained in this ECR are fulfilled. Following construction and appropriate phases of project delivery, long-term mitigation maintenance and monitoring will take place, as applicable. As the following ECR is a draft, some fields have not been completed, and will be filled out as each of the measures is implemented. Note: Some measures may apply to more than one resource area. Duplicative or redundant measures have not been included in this ECR.

The following measures are not considered Mitigation under CEQA.

Description of Commitment	Timing	Responsible Staff	Commitment Type
Air Quality			
AQ-1: Soil binder will be spread on any unpaved roads used for construction purposes and on all project construction parking areas.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-2: Trucks will be washed as they leave the right-of-way as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-3: Construction equipment and vehicles will be properly tuned and maintained. All construction equipment will use low-sulfur fuel as required by the CA Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 93114.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-4: Equipment and materials storage sites will be located as far away from residential, and park uses as practicable. Construction areas will be kept clean and orderly.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Avoidance
AQ-5: All transported loads of soil and wet materials will be covered before transport, or adequate freeboard (space from the top of the material to the top of the truck) will be provided to minimize the emission of dust during transportation.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-6: Dust and mud that are deposited on paved, public roads due to construction activity and traffic will be promptly and regularly removed to reduce PM emissions.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization

AQ-7: The project is located within the jurisdiction of the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) and must comply with the Air District Rules.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-8: Construction contractors working on this project will be mandated to comply with all applicable VCAPCD Rules and to be responsible for payment of all fees as required.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-9: Environmentally sensitive areas will be established near sensitive air receptors. Within these areas, construction activities involving the extended idling of diesel equipment or vehicles will be prohibited to the extent feasible.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Avoidance
AQ-10: Objectionable odors should also be minimized by conducting certain construction activities in areas at least 500 feet from the sensitive receptors as feasible.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-11: The construction contractor must comply with Caltrans' Standard Specifications in Section 14-9 (2023). Section 14-9.02 specifically requires compliance by the contractor with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances. Nonstandard Specification 14-9.05 shall also be added to the project Specifications package to ensure contractor	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization

compliance with all applicable air quality regulations.			
AQ-12: Track-out reduction measures will be used, such as gravel pads at project access points to minimize dust and mud deposits on roads affected by construction traffic.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
AQ-13: Water or dust palliative will be applied to the site and equipment as often as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
Biological Resources			
BIO-1: Caltrans will avoid impacts to nesting birds by scheduling construction outside of the nesting bird season, which is from February 1 to September 1. If construction is scheduled during the nesting bird season, then pre-construction nesting bird surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no later than three days before construction activity. If active nesting birds are observed within the work zone, then the biologist will establish a no-work buffer around the nest until the fledglings are independent. The typical buffer is 150 feet for songbirds and other non-raptors and 500 feet for raptors. If there is a lapse of three days or more after the initial survey, then the project area will need to be surveyed again.	Pre-Construction	Biologist; Environmental Construction Liaison	Minimization
Cultural Resources			
C-1: The stipulations outlined in the PRDMP shall be followed during project construction. The PRDMP requires at least one	Construction	Archaeologist	Minimization

Archaeological Monitor and one Native American Monitor to observe ground-disturbing activities for construction in native soil that is not replacement-in-kind. If cultural features and deposits are uncovered during construction, the post-review and discovery fieldwork methods shall be followed.			
C-2: If buried cultural materials are encountered during construction, it is Caltrans policy that work in that area must stop until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. Should project plans change to include areas that were not surveyed, additional archaeological studies will be required.	Construction	Archaeologist	Minimization
Utilities and Emergency Services			
Minimization U-1: Caltrans shall continue to evaluate design options and coordinate with emergency service providers throughout the project Design phase to ensure certain geometric features of the project do not impact emergency response times or increase hazards.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities			
T-1: Address degraded LOS for side street traffic during the AM peak period at East Portal Street. • Install peak hour left turn restriction on the eastbound movement. It is noted that alternative access to SR-33 northbound during the AM peak period is available at	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization

the adjacent signalized intersection at Larmier Ave. • Consideration of a traffic signal at East Portal Street/SR-33 intersection, along with removal of the traffic signal at the Larmier Ave/SR-33 intersection.			
T-2: Address degraded LOS for side street during the AM and PM peak periods at Park Street. • Install peak hour left turn restriction on the westbound movement. It is noted that alternate access to SR-33 southbound is available through the signalized intersection at Oak View Ave. • Peak hour left turn restrictions on the eastbound movement (private driveway). It is noted that alternative access to SR-33 northbound is available through the signalized intersection at Larmier Ave.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
T-3: Address degraded LOS for the side street during AM and PM peak periods at Short Street. • Install peak hour left turn restriction on the westbound movement. It is noted that alternate access to SR-33 southbound is available through the signalized intersection at Oak View Ave.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
T-4: Address degraded LOS for side street turning onto SR-33 during AM and PM peak periods at Old Grade Street.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization

• Install full time restriction “no left turn” for westbound to southbound movement due to safety concerns and complex intersection geometry. These movements can be made at the Oak View Ave signalized intersection.			
T-5: Larmier Ave Intersection Turn Lane Storage – Extend the storage length from 50 feet to 115 feet for the southbound right turn lane.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
T-6: Oak View Ave Intersection Turn Lane Storage - Extend the storage length from 50 feet to 75 feet for the northbound right turn lane.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
T-7: Santa Ana Blvd/Ojai Dr Intersection Turn Lane Storage – Extend the storage length from 160 feet to 220 feet for the northbound left turn lane and from 50 feet to 120 feet for the southbound right turn lane.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
T-8: Larmier Ave Traffic Signal Optimization – Extend the southbound through green phase by ~10 seconds.	Design	Project Engineer	Minimization
T-9: A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be implemented to minimize direct and cumulative construction impacts on the community. The TMP shall be developed in coordination with local agencies and emergency services, which include the City of Ojai, County of Ventura, California Highway Patrol, and Ventura County Fire Dept. The TMP shall be provided with the	Design; Pre-Construction	Project Engineer	Minimization

construction plan to the County of Ventura, City of Ojai, and County of Ventura Police and Fire Departments before the beginning of construction activities.			
Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff			
WQ-1: The contractor shall prepare and submit a complete Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) to the Caltrans Resident Engineer for review and acceptance. The WPCP must comply with Caltrans Standard Specifications. Temporary construction site BMPs shall be implemented in accordance with the WPCP.	Pre-Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
Paleontology			
P-1: If unanticipated Paleontological resources are encountered, Caltrans shall follow Section 14-7 “Paleontological Resources” of the Caltrans Standard Specifications. This entails stopping all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery, securing the area, and notifying the resident engineer. The resident must then notify the Caltrans Paleontological Coordinator for further direction.	Construction	Resident Engineer; Paleo Coordinator	Minimization
Hazardous Waste			
Minimization HW-1 The contractor shall prepare a project specific Lead Compliance Plan (LCP) to protect workers from exposure to hazards from lead while removing and handling ADL and the yellow traffic stripe residue, and a Work Plan for handling and testing of residue	Pre-Construction	Resident Engineer; Hazardous Waste Unit	Minimization

prior to transport to and disposal at an appropriate disposal facility.			
Minimization HW-2 The contractor will handle, store, transport, and dispose of treated wood waste in accordance with Caltrans standard special provision 14-11.14.	Construction	Resident Engineer; Hazardous Waste Unit	Minimization
Minimization HW-3 The contractor will dispose of electronic waste in accordance with Caltrans standard specification 14-11.15.	Construction	Resident Engineer; Hazardous Waste Unit	Minimization
Noise			
Minimization N-1 Section 14-8.02, Sound Control Requirements, of Caltrans' Standard Specifications states that construction noise levels should not exceed sustained 86 dBA at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. These requirements also state that noise levels generated during construction shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
Climate Change			
GHG-1: Idling will be limited to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
GHG-2: Truck trips will be scheduled outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization

GHG-3: Caltrans will reduce construction waste by re-using or recycling construction and demolition waste that meets Caltrans standards.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
GHG-4: Caltrans will use recycled water for construction to reduce the construction water consumption of potable water.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
GHG-5: Caltrans will maintain equipment in proper working condition, use the right size equipment for the job, and use equipment with new technologies to encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization
GHG-6: Reduce the need to transport earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.	Construction	Resident Engineer	Minimization

Appendix C List of Technical Studies

The following studies and/or technical analyses have been prepared and are incorporated by reference into this Environmental Document.

- Ojai Valley Highway 33 Multimodal and Community Enhancement Study, March 2020
- Community Impact Assessment Memorandum, July 2023
- Preliminary Stormwater Data Report, December 2019
- Air Quality Technical Report, June 2023
- Noise Review Memorandum, August 2022
- Natural Environment Study Minimal Impacts, November 2022
- Floodplain Encroachment Report, July 2023
- Archeological Survey Report & Historic Property Survey Report, June 2023
- Visual Impact Assessment, October 2022
- Hazardous Waste Assessment, May 2023
- Scoping Summary Report, August 2023
- Location Hydraulics Report, July 2023
- Traffic Analysis Report, November 2024