

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: _____

_____From: California Dept. of Transportation
100 S. Main St. MS 16A
Los Angeles, CA 90012Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report**
*Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.*Project Title: US 101 Improvement ProjectProject Location: Ventura County

Project Description: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in coordination with the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), is proposing capacity and operational improvements along US Highway 101 (US 101), between State Route 23 and State Route 33, from postmile (PM) 4.1 to 30.9. This is to inform you that the California Department of Transportation will be the lead agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the Project described below. Your participation as a responsible agency is requested in the preparation and review of this document.

We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed Project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the Project.

A more detailed Project description, location map, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

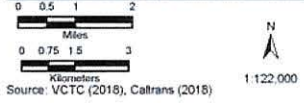
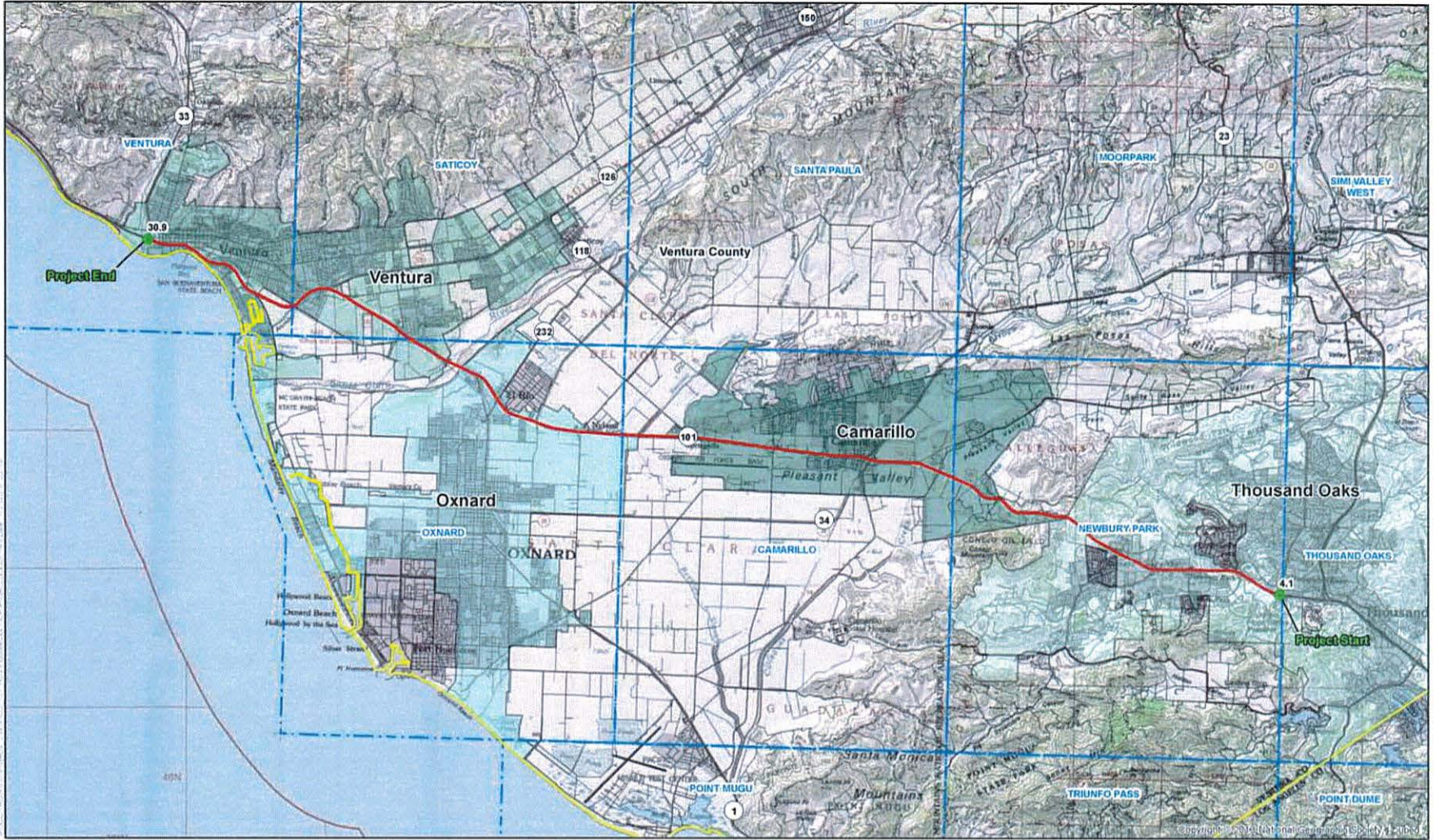
A copy of the Initial Study (is) (is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please direct your response to Susan Tse Telephone (213) 897-1821 at the address shown above. Please supply us with the name for a contact person in your agency.

Date March 14, 2019Signature
Title

Deputy District Director



Legend	
—	Proposed Project Alignment
●	Post-Mile (PM)
	County
	USGS Quadrangle Boundary
ABC	USGS Quadrangle Name
	City: Camarillo
	City: Oxnard
	City: Thousand Oaks
	City: Ventura

Project Location

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in coordination with the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), is proposing capacity and operational improvements along US Highway 101 (US 101) from postmile (PM) 4.1 to 30.9. The Project area includes the communities of Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Oxnard, and Ventura in Ventura County, from approximately State Route 23 to State Route 33. The existing US 101 within the proposed Project corridor consists primarily of three 12-foot-wide general purpose lanes in each direction, with 12-foot-wide auxiliary lanes at certain locations. The Project proposes to widen US 101 in order to add through lanes in each direction, as well as potential auxiliary lanes.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed Project is to:

- Reduce existing congestion
- Improve traffic operations
- Accommodate future traffic volumes forecasted in this area

Need

US 101 within the proposed Project limits consists solely of general purpose lanes in both directions. Currently, during peak hours, the level of service (LOS) varies from F (vehicle operating speed less than 29 miles per hour) to C (vehicle operating speed greater than 54 miles per hour). The LOS is a letter designation that describes a range of operating conditions of a particular roadway, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F representing the worst. LOS E and F are generally considered unacceptable.

Congestion within the Project region has increased by about 45% since 1990 and is anticipated to increase further. Due to the projected population growth for Ventura County, currently estimated at approximately 1% annually, it is anticipated that traffic demand will continue to increase and LOS will continue to degrade along US 101.

Alternatives

There are four alternatives under consideration, including the No-Build Alternative. Additionally, auxiliary lanes would be included as design options for each alternative, when beneficial.

- Alternative 1 - No-Build Alternative
- Alternative 2 - Addition of one non-standard HOV lanes in each direction
- Alternative 3 - Addition of one standard HOV lane in each direction
- Alternative 4 - Addition of two standard HOV lanes in each direction

Alternative 1: No-Build Alternative

Environmental review must consider the effects of not implementing the proposed Project. The No-Build Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the impacts associated with the build alternatives. The No-Build Alternative would maintain the existing US 101. If no action is taken, the LOS throughout the Project corridor would remain at a level that is unacceptable to users of the facility. Adverse effects of the No-Build Alternative would lead to an inability to meet the purpose and need for the Project, and are expected to result in deteriorating LOS, traffic delays, and possible delays in emergency response times. This approach is inconsistent with the Caltrans' goal of providing an efficient mobility system.

Alternative 2: Addition of one non-standard HOV lane in each direction

Alternative 2 proposes the addition of a non-standard HOV lane in each direction. Alternative 2 would utilize the existing median as well as the inside and outside shoulders to widen the roadway. In order to minimize impacts related to right of way, the lanes and shoulder would have non-standard widths at various locations along the corridor. However, some widening beyond the

existing State-owned right of way would be required for this alternative to accommodate sight distance and roadway curvature. The widening needed is anticipated to be approximately 4 feet, with the resulting outside shoulder width being a minimum of 4 feet.

Alternative 2 would also modify on-ramps to accommodate HOV lanes and ramp metering, where appropriate. The resulting on-ramps would have standard lane widths and shoulder configurations. This alternative would also require the modification, reconstruction, and/or relocation of some bridge and over-crossing facilities.

Alternative 3: Addition of one standard HOV lane in each direction

Alternative 3 proposes the addition of one standard HOV lane and standard outside/inside shoulders in each direction. The roadway would be widened approximately 16 feet in each direction. In order to accommodate the roadway widening, right of way acquisition would be required at some locations within the Project area. The resulting Project would have standard 12-foot general purpose lanes and one HOV lane, as well as 10-foot-wide outside shoulders.

Similar to Alternative 2, this alternative would modify the existing on-ramps at some locations, where required. Additionally, Alternative 3 would require the widening of some bridge and overcrossings to accommodate the proposed HOV lanes.

Alternative 4: Addition of two standard HOV lanes in each direction

Alternative 4 proposes the addition of two standard HOV lanes and standard outside/inside shoulders in each direction. The roadway would be widened approximately 28 feet in each direction. In order to accommodate the roadway widening, right of way acquisition would be required within the Project area. The resulting Project would have standard 12-foot general purpose lanes and two HOV lanes, as well as 10-foot-wide outside shoulders.

This alternative would modify the existing on-ramps at some locations, where required. Additionally, Alternative 4 would require the widening of some bridge and overcrossings to accommodate the proposed HOV lanes.

Potential Environmental Effects:

A Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report was prepared by Caltans in 2013, which identified areas of potential concern with the implementation of the proposed Project. Resources that have the potential to be affected are discussed below.

Aesthetics: Due to the widening of the existing highway, some impacts on visual resources may occur with the addition of retaining walls and the removal of trees and rock outcroppings. The addition of retaining walls could have the potential to limit the view of the surrounding landforms from the existing roadway. Potential impacts on the viewshed will be analyzed as part of the Visual Impact Assessment that is prepared in support of the environmental document.

Agriculture: No Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance is located within the Project area. However, some farmland exists within the Project corridor and may be affected by right of way acquisition for the proposed widening activities. Farmland acquisition will follow all applicable local, state, and federal policies protecting farmlands. Additionally, all property acquisition would conform with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Properties potentially affected, as well as the applicable zoning, will be identified and addressed in the environmental document.

Air Quality: The Project is currently identified in the Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for the project approvals and environmental document phase only. The proposed Project would need to be included in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program as the Project progresses. The proposed Project is within the South Central Coast Air Basin, which is a nonattainment area for federal and state standards for ozone and is a nonattainment area for the state standard for particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter (PM₁₀). An Air Quality Report will be performed in support of the environmental document.

Biological Resources: Riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities, jurisdictional waters, and listed species are known to occur within and adjacent to the Project area. A Natural Environment Study, as well as a Jurisdictional Delineation, will be prepared in support of the environmental document. Additionally, coordination with United States Army Corps of Engineers, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will take place during the preparation of the environmental document.

Due to the potential need to widen bridges, impacts on roosting bats and maternal colonies and nesting birds may occur. The potential for impacts on bats and nesting birds will be studied as part of the preparation of the environmental document. Additionally, due to the need to widen the existing roadway, impacts on wildlife movement may occur. A detailed wildlife corridor study will be prepared in support of the environmental document.

Cultural Resources: The proposed Project has potential to affect historic and archaeological resources. Cultural resources within the Project area will be identified and analyzed during the preparation of the environmental document, with the preparation of a Historic Property Survey Report, Archaeological Survey Report, and Historic Resource Evaluation Report. These documents will be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer to ensure compliance with laws and regulations related to cultural resources.

Geology and Soils: The proposed Project will require the preparation of a geotechnical report. This report will analyze geologic, soil, and seismic conditions in the vicinity of the proposed Project. The geotechnical report will be prepared in support of the environmental document.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Project construction activities and roadway operations would generate GHG emissions, which will be quantified using approved methods. Estimated emissions from each of the alternatives will be compared to determine the potential for impacts related to climate change. The GHG emissions analysis will be conducted as part of the Air Quality Report prepared in support of the environmental document.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: The proposed Project area is a major highway corridor, with routine truck traffic potentially containing hazardous materials. This would not change with implementation of the proposed Project. A complete screening of the potential hazards associated with the proposed Project will be developed in support of the environmental document.

The proposed Project may require right of way acquisition to accommodate the widening of the highway. A complete screening of the hazards associated with the proposed Project will be developed during the preparation of the environmental document, through the development of an Initial Site Assessment. Any properties that will be acquired will be subject to a Phase I or II Site investigation.

Hydrology and Water Quality: Due to the potential need to widen the roadway, the proposed Project has the potential to affect drainages and drainage patterns within the Project area. Potential impacts on drainages will be analyzed in the environmental document. Additionally, widening the roadway would increase the amount of impervious surface area within the Project area, increasing the amount of runoff. Increases in runoff would require that Best Management Practices (BMP) be considered for the Project to treat runoff. Any BMPs that are identified for incorporation into the proposed Project will be discussed in the environmental document.

Land Use and Planning: The proposed Project is located along an existing highway facility. As such, widening the roadway is not anticipated to create a new division to an established community. The Project's consistency with the appropriate local and general plans will be discussed in the environmental document.

Mineral Resources: The proposed Project is not anticipated to affect mineral resources.

Noise: During construction, the Project may generate ground borne vibration and noise. The proposed Project will also require the preparation of a Noise Study Report (NSR) to identify potential noise impacts, as part of the development of the environmental document. If the NSR shows that there is a potential for the Project to cause noise levels that exceed regulated thresholds, a Noise Abatement Decision Report (NADR) will be prepared. Any potential abatement measures will be discussed within the NADR. Local ordinances related to noise, as well as those from other agencies, will be discussed in the environmental document.

Population and Housing: Some property acquisitions may be required to accommodate the proposed widening activities. All property acquisition would conform with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Properties potentially affected will be identified and addressed in the environmental document.

Public Services: The proposed Project has the potential to affect public services in the Project area. Impacts related to public services will be analyzed in the Community Impact Analysis prepared in support of the environmental document.

Recreation: Some property acquisitions may be required to accommodate the proposed widening activities, which may affect recreational resources. Impacts related to recreation will be analyzed in the Community Impact Analysis prepared in support of the environmental document.

Transportation and Traffic: The proposed Project is projected to reduce congestion and improve traffic operations. A Traffic Operations Analysis Report will be prepared in support of the environmental document. The proposed Project could result in changes in circulation patterns and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the region, which will be discussed in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report and the environmental document.

Tribal Cultural Resources: Some property acquisitions may be required to accommodate the proposed widening activities, which may affect tribal cultural resources. A comprehensive outreach program to tribal representatives will be conducted in support of the environmental document.

Utilities and Service Systems: Some utility relocations may be required to accommodate the widening of the roadway. Close coordination with the respective utility owners will be needed throughout the development of the Project. Utilities potentially affected will be identified during the preparation of the environmental document.

Scoping Process

Caltrans, in coordination with VCTC, will be holding public scoping meetings at the following dates and locations:

Ventura City Hall - Community Room
501 Poli St, Ventura, CA 93001
April 16th, 2019 6:00-8:00 PM

Oxnard Performing Arts Center – Ventura Room
800 Hobson Way, Oxnard, CA 93030
April 17th, 2019 6:00-8:00 PM

Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Center – Founders Room
2100 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362
April 18th, 2019 6:00-8:00 PM.

Camarillo Library – Community Room
4101 Las Posas Rd, Camarillo, CA 93010
April 22nd, 2019 6:00-8:00 PM

As part of the scoping process, the public is encouraged to attend and submit comments and concerns about the proposed Project. A Notice of Scoping will appear in the following newspapers: The Ventura Star, Thousand Oaks Acorn, Camarillo Acorn, Ventura County Reporter, Breeze and Vida. Information about this Project can also be found at the following website: ourfuture101.org

Responsible and Trustee Agencies will receive a copy of the Notice of Preparation by mail. The current list of Trustee and Responsible Agencies is as follows:

United States Army Corps of Engineers
United States Environmental Protection Agency
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Coastal Commission
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
State Historic Preservation Officer
Union Pacific Railroad
Public Utilities Commission

This list is not final. As the scoping process progresses and interested parties come forward, this list will be amended.