

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Los Angeles and
Ventura

From: (Public Agency): Southern California Regional Rail Authority
(SCRRA) 900 Wilshire Boulevard #1500
Los Angeles, CA 90017

(Address)

Project Title: Ventura Subdivision Track and Structures Rehabilitation Project and Devonshire Crossing Improvements Project

Project Applicant: SCRRA

Project Location - Specific:

See attached Project Description

Project Location - City: See attached Project Description Project Location - County: Los Angeles & Ventura

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

See attached Project Description

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: SCRRA

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: SCRRA

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Track&Structures: §15301; Devonshire: §15301
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____


Reasons why project is exempt:

The Track and Structures Project is exempt because the project includes replacement of existing track and culverts in-kind, within the existing footprint of the existing infrastructure due to the deteriorated condition of the infrastructure. The Devonshire Crossing Project is exempt because the proposed crossing safety improvements would consist of minor alterations to the existing track crossing (street, sidewalk, and track) for the purpose of public safety involving negligible or no expansion of use.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Elizabeth Lun Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 909-929-2360

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature:  Date: 1/19/2022 Title: Assistant Director, Design

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

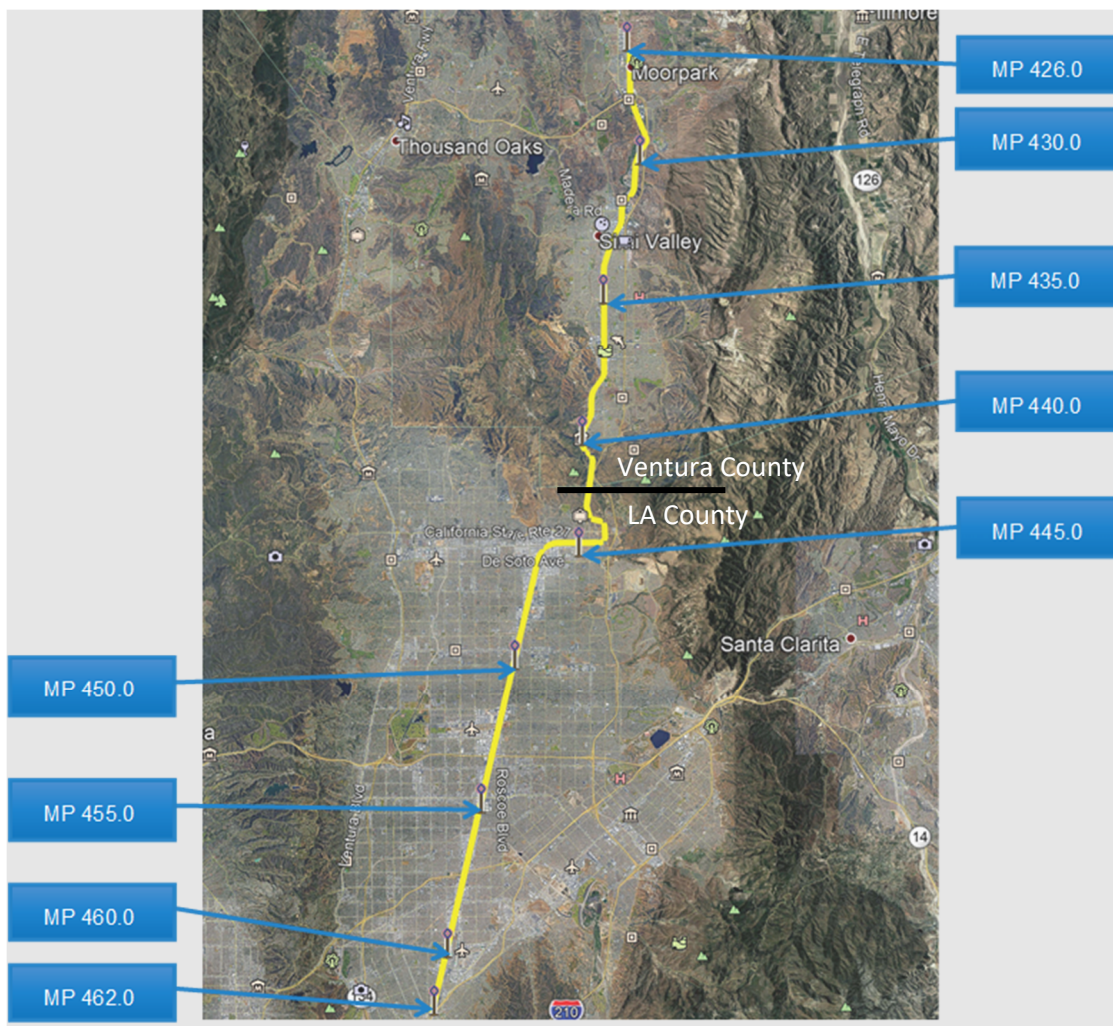
Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Ventura Subdivision Track and Structures Rehabilitation Project

PROJECT LOCATION

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) proposes the Ventura Subdivision Track and Structures Rehabilitation Project (“Track and Structures Project”) at multiple locations in Burbank, Moorpark, and Simi Valley within the Counties of Los Angeles and Ventura County along the Ventura County Line railroad corridor. The Track and Structures Project would be located within an existing railroad ROW with active passenger and freight rail operations on Metrolink’s Ventura Subdivision between MP 426.4 - 436.1, MP 438.35 - 445.3, MP 445.8 - 462.4, and MP 441.19 - 442.59 (refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1: Track and Structures Project Location



EXISTING CONDITION

The Track and Structures Project area traverses an urbanized and high desert railroad corridor with residential, commercial, and industrial land uses bordering the north and south of the right-of-way (ROW)

for majority of the subdivision. The Track and Structures Project area has no streams, wetlands, or native vegetation. Vegetation in the Project area consists of trees and brush. No native habitat is present.

SYNOPSIS

The SCRRA proposes the Ventura Subdivision Track and Structures Rehabilitation Project (Track and Structures Project) to multiple locations between MP 426.4 - 436.1, 438.35 - 445.67, and MP 445.8 - 463.0 and Tunnel 26 Rehabilitation between MP 441.19 - 442.59 in SCRRA's Ventura Subdivision. The total Track and Structures Project cost is \$20,800,000 for Track and Structures Rehabilitation and \$3,000,000 for Tunnel 26 Repair and Rehabilitation, all of which is FRA Grant Funded. The proposed action includes the in-kind replacement of 1 highway-rail crossing, 8 turnouts, 5,574 timber ties, 4,057 timber upgrades to concrete ties, 4,050 track feet of fastener upgrades, 9,974 feet of rail, 4 culvert replacements, 4 culvert rehabilitations, 2,000 feet of undercutting 1,200 feet of Right-of-Way (ROW) grading, and tunnel improvements. Rehabilitation of Tunnel 26 will include the in-kind replacement of 1,500 cross ties, to be replaced within the tunnel and at approaches, 7,369 linear feet of ballast replacement, and repairs and upgrades to the drainage and electrical systems. Acquisition of the ROW is not required to deliver the proposed action. All project work is shovel ready and will not require design support. All project components will be replaced in-kind.

Construction of the proposed action would occur within an existing, active, and heavily trafficked railroad ROW that hosts commuter, intercity, and freight rail service operated by SCRRA, Amtrak, and Union Pacific, respectively, or under multiple absolute work windows (AWW). An AWW is a temporary track shut down within designated milepost limits. The proposed action is not anticipated to alter the traffic density or operational characteristics of rail services operating through the Track and Structures Project area.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Track and Structures Project is to enhance safety and reliability by maintaining a State of Good Repair and ensure the railroad infrastructure remains current with SCRRA and industry standards on Metrolink's Ventura County line. The proposed track and structures rehabilitation will increase resiliency of the Ventura Subdivision at various locations that are in need of improvement. The rehabilitation would allow Metrolink, Union Pacific and Amtrak to maintain on-time and reliable service through this corridor, and alternative service in the future. This work is vital in providing safe and reliable Metrolink service to the outlying communities in Los Angeles and Ventura County, while preserving the longevity of this key passenger and freight route.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The Track and Structures Project study area is comprised of several locations including: 8 culvert locations (MP 432.51, 439.09, 439.2, 442.8, 443.6, 443.77, 444.1, 459.61), rail replacements between MP 426.0 and MP 463.0, tie replacements between MP 427.0 and MP 463.0, crossing rehabilitation at Tujunga Ave (MP 459.06), grading on the railroad ROW between MP 440.1 and MP 444.1, undercutting between MP 442.6 and MP 444.4, 8 turnout rehabilitation locations (MP 460.8 CP Katz, 446.6 CP Bernson, 447.07, 452.01, 461.49), replacement of cross ties within Tunnel 26 (MP 441.19 - 442.59), ballast replacement within Tunnel 26 (MP 441.19 - 442.59), and repairs and upgrades to drainage and electrical systems (MP 441.19 - 442.59).

The following actions will be performed as part of the Track and Structures Project:

Culverts: The complete replacement of four culverts and repairs to four culverts will require earthwork, temporary shoring, erosion control, installation of soldier pile walls with lagging, new ballast, and subgrade within the limits of the existing facility. Two locations will require a temporary track panel removal. Rehabilitation shall include, but not limited to, the replacement and/or installation of headwalls, wingwalls, handrails, walkways, ballast retainers, corrugated metal pipes, arch reinforcements, and soldier pile walls with lagging, per current Metrolink standards. Additionally, this Track and Structures Project includes scour protection at the inlet and outlet, as needed, various pipe rehabilitation methods, pipe cleaning services, and Hydrologic and Hydraulic studies, as needed per culvert.

Ties: Existing ties and fasteners will be removed and replaced in-kind within the limits of the existing facility. This may include upgrades from wood to concrete ties in high degree curves, and upgrades from cut spikes to pandrol clips where fasteners are failing.

Rail: Existing rail sections will be removed and replaced in-kind within the limits of the existing facility. Rail rehabilitation work will include replacement of worn rail, transposing of rail where possible, rail welding and destressing, replacement of fastenings with new more resilient fasteners, per current Metrolink standards, and surfacing and stabilizing the locations where rail was replaced.

Turnouts: The turnout replacements will require the removal, disposal and replacement of existing turnout and track, excavation of the roadbed, installation of HMA underlayment, ballast, sub ballast, rail, ties, approach rail and transition ties. A new concrete or wood tie turnout will be installed with new asphalt underlayment, ballast, and sub ballast per current Metrolink standards.

Grade Crossing: The highway-rail crossing will require the removal, disposal and replacement of the existing crossing and track, excavation of the roadbed, installation of HMA underlayment, ballast, rail, ties, approach rail, transition ties and HMA paving to match the existing roadway. Current Metrolink standards also include an asphalt underlayment, installation of signal conduit, perforated drainage pipes to promote the drainage of water, and updated traffic striping at the crossing.

Tunnel 26: Tunnel 26 repairs and rehabilitation will require the replacement in-kind of cross ties within the tunnel and at approaches, removal and replacement of fouled ballast, and repairs to the drainage and electrical systems.

PERMITS

The Track and Structures Project would require approval of two permits, as listed below. These permits would be to provide temporary road closure and detour routes, for up to two weekends.

- Traffic control permits with local city for crossing replacements; and
- Detour Plans with local city for crossing replacements.

Devonshire Crossing Improvements Project

PROJECT LOCATION

The SCRRA proposes the Devonshire Crossing Improvements Project (“Devonshire Crossing Project”) to improve safety and bring the crossing up to the latest SCRRA standards. This Project is located at the Devonshire Street highway-rail at-grade crossing at MP 445.17 on the SCRRA Ventura Subdivision in the City of Los Angeles (Chatsworth neighborhood), County of Los Angeles. The at-grade crossing is approximately 0.25 mile north of the Metrolink Chatsworth Station (refer to Figure 2). This area is a developed urban environment with commercial land uses adjacent to the crossing. The Devonshire Crossing Project includes seven elements (Element 1 through Element 7), along with another five potential elements (Element 8 through Element 12). Refer to Figure 3 through Figure 5 for the locations of these various project elements.

The proposed improvements would be constructed within the SCRRA right-of-way, City of Los Angeles public right-of-way, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) public right-of-way, and/or private properties. Approximately 4,066 square feet of right-of-way easements is anticipated within private right-of-way, as shown on Figure 3.

Grade Crossing Name	CPUC No.	DOT No.
Devonshire Street	101VE-445.17	745921T

Figure 2: Devonshire Crossing Project Location



Map Source: Google Maps

EXISTING CONDITION

The existing condition is a two-track crossing of Devonshire Street, which is a four-lane arterial roadway with Class II bicycle lanes through the crossing zone (on-street parking is provided along the curb outside of the crossing zone). There is an approximate 40-foot long raised median along the west side of

Devonshire Street and an approximate 100-foot long raised median along the east side. A pair of automatic crossing gates (one mounted on the raised median and the other on the sidewalk) are provided on both the eastbound and westbound approaches. On the east side of the crossing, there are maintenance access points with K-Rail and swing gates on the north and south sides.

There are commercial land uses immediately abutting the railroad right-of-way in three of the four quadrants; the southeast quadrant is vacant. Driveways are located in the three developed quadrants within 20 feet of the railroad right-of-way. The Devonshire Crossing Improvements Project area is void of sensitive environmental resources/conditions- there are no onsite or nearby: streams, wetlands, vegetation, or native habitat; unusual environmental circumstances; Scenic Highways; or historic-aged resources. Also, the Project site is not included on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

SYNOPSIS

The SCRRA is proposing crossing safety improvements at the Devonshire Street highway-rail at-grade crossing on the SCRRA Ventura subdivision, as shown in Figure 3. The safety improvements would include, but not be limited to, installation of automatic pedestrian warning gates, emergency swing gates, handrail channelization, and median extensions, and rehabilitation of the existing track crossing. The crossing's design would conform to the latest SCRRA Design Criteria Manual (DCM) and engineering standards, as well as City of Los Angeles roadway design standards and federal and state Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Relocation of utilities is not anticipated. Identification and coordination with potential impacted utility owners would be evaluated as part of design development. Most of the improvements are anticipated to remain within the existing SCRRA railroad right-of-way, LA Metro, and City of Los Angeles public right-of-way. Property acquisitions may be required at three of the crossing's four quadrants (i.e., northwest, northeast, and southwest) and at the maintenance access driveway. Potential acquisitions will be further evaluated as part of design development. Negligible expansion of the existing crossing is anticipated.

Construction is anticipated to occur over 12 months. Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) may be required at three quadrants of the crossing and maintenance access driveway. TCEs would be further evaluated as part of design development. Construction activities will be phased to have one vehicular lane operational in each direction. Also, nightwork may be required to reduce disruption to adjacent properties during construction. Construction of the proposed improvements would require minimal excavation below the existing ground surface, with most of the asphalt pavement being rehabilitated.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Devonshire Crossing Project is to provide crossing safety improvements at the Devonshire Street highway-rail at-grade crossing to enhance pedestrian safety, access, and secure/protect railroad right-of-way. The beneficiaries of the Devonshire Crossing Project are passenger and freight rail services, and pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed Devonshire Crossing Project improvements are listed below. Refer to Figure 3 through Figure 5, which depicts the locations of these various Project elements, which are enumerated below:

- Signing, Striping, and Pavement Rehabilitation (**Element 1**) - Revise RXR Pavement Markings and W10-1 Advance Warning Signs – These features are currently misplaced (refer to concept plan). Reposition Stop Line – The stop bar should be located 8 feet in front of the crossing gates. Rehabilitate pavement in the immediate vicinity of the crossing.
- Extend Short Median (**Element 2**) – the west side median should be extended to the standard minimum length of 100 feet.
- Add Pedestrian Treatments (**Element 3**) – Pedestrian automatic gates, emergency swing gates and railing channelization would be added by providing a curb extension through the crossing zone. This treatment also improves the visibility of approaching pedestrians, which may be hidden behind the existing signal house in the southwest quadrant. Right-of-way fencing would be extended back from the crossing.
- Vehicular entry gates (**Element 4**) – New vehicular automatic gates would be installed on both approaches of the crossing. This feature is currently provided, however, with the addition of curb extensions, gates would need to be placed in the appropriate locations.
- Upgrade Signal Case (**Element 5**) – The signal equipment case in the northeast quadrant is substandard and would be relocated to the south side where it would be replaced with a 6 x 6-foot enclosure.
- Remove Sidewalk Hazard and existing (non-operational) driveway (**Element 6**) – It was noted that there are three guardrail mounts protruding from the sidewalk in the northeast quadrant. These should be removed for safety purposes. On the southeast quadrant, an existing driveway (currently not in use) has been fenced off, with trees planted behind the driveway approach. The driveway approach would be replaced with standard curb and gutter. The existing sidewalk adjacent to the driveway would be repaired to provide a safe walking surface to/from the crossing.
- Track Rehabilitation (**Element 7**) – The current condition of the track at the crossing is marginal and in need of rehabilitation. The existing trackbed and concrete crossing panels will be replaced. Concrete crossing panels through the pedestrian areas will be ADA compliant.

Potential Upgrades:

- Channelize Driveway (**Element 8**) – The commercial driveway in the northwest quadrant is within 60-feet of the crossing zone; channelization would preclude vehicles from turning left out of the driveway to evade the entry gate.
- Provide Exit Gate (**Element 9, not labeled in figure**) – Installation of an exit gate on the westbound lanes would prevent vehicles from evading the eastbound entry gate from the driveway on the northwest quadrant.

- Improve Maintenance Access (**Element 10**) – The existing maintenance access would be upgraded by providing an improved access from the adjacent station parking lot.
- Sidewalk/Path to Chatsworth Station from Devonshire (**Element 11**) – Pedestrians currently access the Chatsworth Station from the southeast quadrant of the crossing. Access to the Chatsworth station would be enhanced by providing a sidewalk connection from Devonshire Street to adjacent parking lot. Lighting would be added along the path for additional safety.
- Near Side Station Stop Signal Upgrade (**Element 12 not labeled in figure**) – The Devonshire Street crossing gates are activated by the arrival of a westbound train at the Chatsworth station, immediately south of the crossing. This crossing warning system would time out and recover without a train passing through causing unnecessary delay to vehicles. SCRRRA has developed a “near side stop” signal upgrade, which may be added to mitigate this condition.

PERMITS

Devonshire Crossing Project

The Devonshire Crossing Project would require approval of two permits: a City of Los Angeles “B” Permit and a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) GO-88B Permit. Prior to GO-88B Permit application submittal, a field diagnostic meeting would take place.

Figure 3: Devonshire Crossing Improvements

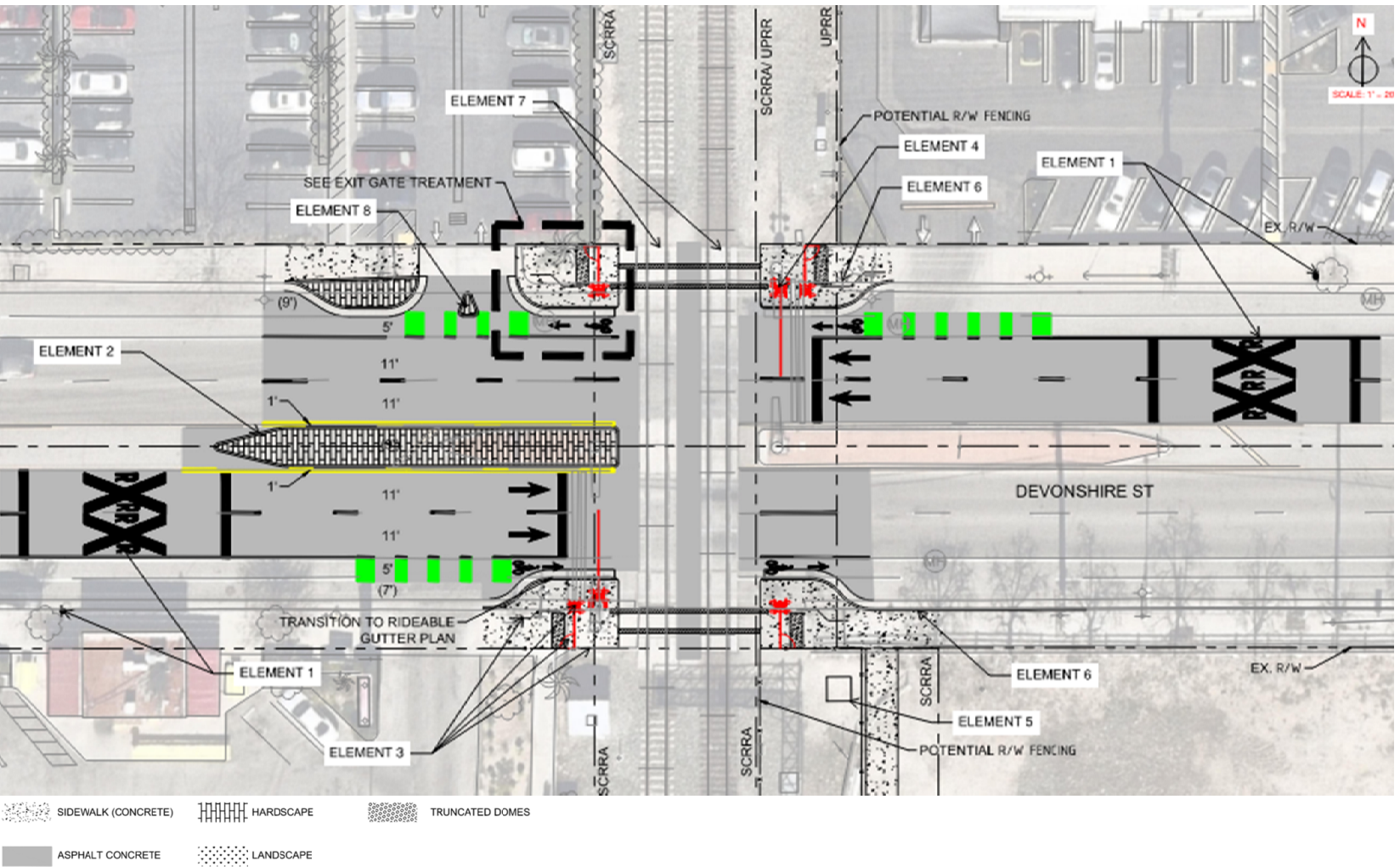


Figure 4: Devonshire Crossing Improvements Project Exit-Gate

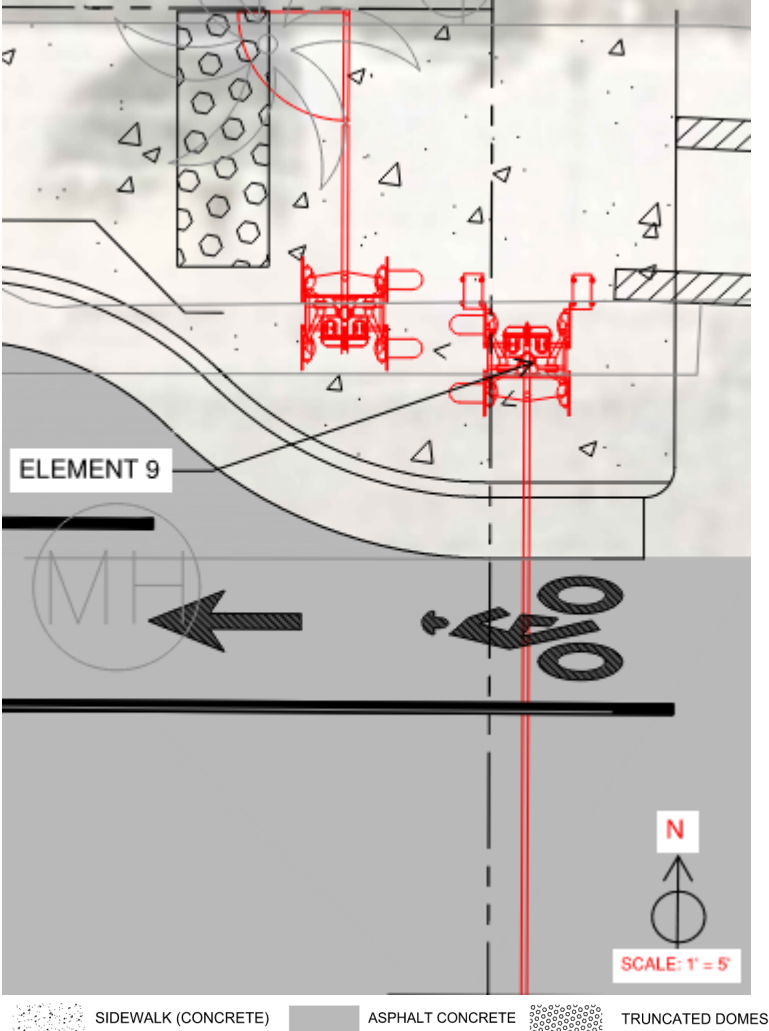


Figure 5: Devonshire Crossing Improvements Project - Maintenance Access & Sidewalk Connection

