



City of Santa Barbara California

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT SCH 2024100348 AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING ON MAY 1, 2025 FOR THE LOS PATOS UNDERPASS REMOVAL PROJECT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Barbara, as lead agency, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Los Patos Underpass Removal Project (Project). The Draft EIR analyzes the potential environmental effects associated with the proposed Project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Santa Barbara (City) has prepared this Notice of Availability (NOA) to provide responsible agencies and other interested parties with notice of the availability of the Draft EIR and solicit comments and concerns regarding the environmental issues associated with the proposed Project. A Final EIR (Response to Comments) will be prepared following public review and comment. The City will consider this information when deliberating on the Project.

PROJECT TITLE: Los Patos Underpass Removal Project (PLN2019-00591)

PROJECT LOCATION: The Project is located along Los Patos Way and Exit 95 on southbound U.S. 101, from Union Pacific Railroad mile-post 372.5 to U.S. 101 mile-post 11.65; the Project would be located within the right-of-way owned by the California Department of Transportation, Union Pacific Railroad, and the City of Santa Barbara.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Project would consist of the removal of the Los Patos Rail Bridge, owned and operated by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR); installation of new fill material and ballast; and the placement of new tracks on that fill. The Project would also include the construction of temporary railroad tracks (commonly referred to as shoofly tracks) to maintain rail operations while work on the main track takes place. While the Project is a distinct City project, it is closely related to other separate approved projects in the area: the Los Patos/Cabrillo Roundabout and the UPRR Bridge Replacement Project (Cabrillo/UPRR Bridge Project), along with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) U.S. 101 High Occupancy Vehicle and Widening Project's 4E North Segment Project (US 101 HOV Project).

To facilitate implementation of both the Cabrillo/UPRR Bridge Project and the US 101 HOV Project per the UPRR's requirements, the Project would include a shoofly that bypasses both the Los Patos Rail Bridge and the nearby Cabrillo Boulevard Rail Bridge main line. Accordingly, the shoofly is required for both approved Projects, and the Project (if approved) and the Cabrillo/UPRR Bridge Project would be constructed concurrently.

Following the closure and removal of the Los Patos Way off-ramp (Exit 95) on the southbound U.S. 101, which would occur under the U.S. 101 HOV Project, the Project would demolish and remove the Los Patos Rail Bridge, including its abutments, center pier, girders, and decking. The bridge would be replaced with solid fill material, and Los Patos Way south of the railroad tracks would be configured as a cul-de-sac. During the bridge removal and construction, rail service would continue via a shoofly built on the UPRR's right-of-way, crossing Los Patos Way and Cabrillo Boulevard. The shoofly would be supported by 8,000 cubic yards of fill and would include a bridge over Cabrillo Boulevard. The Project would necessitate the removal of approximately 100 trees, with replacement planting planned; the exact numbers and locations of replacement trees are not known at this time. Grading and earthwork for the Project is anticipated to last three weeks, and the reconstruction of the rail components would be completed in two days (over one weekend). The Project's location does not contain sites listed on hazardous substances databases/lists enumerated under Section 65962.5(a) of the California Code of Regulations.

SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The City has prepared a Draft EIR pursuant to CEQA which analyzes environmental impacts in the areas of Aesthetics, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and land Use and Planning, Cumulative Impacts, and Other CEQA-Required Analysis. The Draft EIR identified significant and unavoidable environmental effects related to aesthetics, biological resources, and land use and planning due to the tree removal required for the Project, and significant and unavoidable environmental effects related to cultural resources due to the removal of the Los Patos Rail Bridge. Impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials and biological resources would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated, and impacts to all other environmental topic areas as identified by Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines would be less than significant or less than significant. The Project site does not contain sites listed on hazardous substances databases/lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: A 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR will commence on **April 11, 2025, and end on May 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.** All comments on the Draft EIR must be received by the City by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday May 27, 2025. Comments may be submitted via mail, e-mail, or hand delivery. Please send your comments to: City of Santa Barbara, Public Works, Engineering Division, Attn: **Beth Anna Cornett, Senior Planner**, 630 Garden Street, PO Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990, or send them electronically to BCornett@SantaBarbaraCA.gov.

The Draft EIR can be viewed on the City's website: www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/EIR. Printed copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the Permit Counter and the Santa Barbara Public Library.

The Permit Counter is located in the Community Development/Public Works Building at 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, California. The Public Counter is open for walk-in services Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. On Wednesdays, the counter is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – no appointment needed.

Santa Barbara Public Library (40 E. Anapamu St.) hours are 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING: A public hearing on the Draft EIR will be held before Planning Commission on **May 1, 2025, at 1:00 pm.** You are invited to attend the hearing and address your verbal comments to the Planning Commission. Meeting agendas, minutes, and videos are available online at SantaBarbaraCA.gov/PC. All reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities; call (805) 564-5305 one week in advance.

If you challenge the project approval or environmental document in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to the public hearing.

* **NOTE:** The regular Planning Commission meeting begins at 1:00 p.m. Thursday afternoon. On April 24, 2025, an agenda with all items to be heard on May 1, 2025, will be posted on the outdoor bulletin board at City Hall, 735 Anacapa Street, and online at SantaBarbaraCA.gov/PC.

*Meetings can be viewed live on City TV-Channel 18, or on your computer via SantaBarbaraCA.gov/CityTV
Meeting rebroadcast schedule can be found at SantaBarbaraCA.gov/CityTVProgramGuide.*