INITIAL STUDY/PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

City of Encinitas Vehicle Miles Traveled Exchange Program

Prepared for:

City of Encinitas

April 2025

INITIAL STUDY/PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

City of Encinitas Vehicle Miles Traveled Exchange Program

Prepared for:

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April 2025

PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

PROJECT: CITY OF ENCINITAS VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED EXCHANGE PROGRAM

LEAD AGENCY: CITY OF ENCINITAS

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over approval of the project. The City of Encinitas (City) is the CEQA lead agency because it is responsible for adoption and implementation of the proposed Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Exchange Program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The proposed program is a VMT Exchange Program (Program) – a voluntary program in which discretionary development applicants can participate to reduce the amount of VMT generated by their projects. The Program will also provide applicants with the option to reduce potentially significant VMT impacts identified through the CEQA review process by constructing specified VMT-reducing projects that have been identified by the City. The Program will provide applicants with the option to implement VMT Exchange Program projects, which include pedestrian network and bicycle network improvements that are located within existing developed rights-of-way.

If the Program is adopted, any VMT-reducing projects that an applicant voluntarily elects to implement would be adopted as mitigation measures in the CEQA environmental review document for the applicable project. The Program would require that VMT-reducing projects be constructed as a condition of approval by the applicant before finalizing a building permit. Ongoing monitoring and tracking of the implementation of VMT-reducing projects would be included in the City's annual Climate Action Plan implementation status report.

FINDINGS

An Initial Study has been prepared to assess the project's potential effects on the environment and the significance of those effects. Based on the Initial Study, the City has determined that the project would not have any significant effects on the environment. Therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of CEQA, the City has independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the project and finds that the Initial Study and Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment of the City.

I hereby approve this project:

_____

Patty Anders, Planning Manager
City of Encinitas
(to be signed upon approval of the project after the public review period is complete)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ASTREA	Aerial Support to Regional Enforcement Agencies
Basin Plan	Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin
BMP	best management practice
CAA	federal Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
CAP	climate action plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
City	City of Encinitas
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon-dioxide-equivalent
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
dB	decibels
diesel PM	diesel particulate matter
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EAP	Energy Action Plan
EMC	City of Encinitas Municipal Code
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FMMP	Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSP	groundwater sustainability plan
IS/proposed ND	Initial Study/Proposed Negative Declaration

lbs/day	pounds per day
LOS	level of service
MHCP	Multiple Habitat Conservation Program
MLD	most likely descendant
MRZ	mineral resource zone
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NCTD	North County Transit District
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OMWD	Olivenhain Municipal Water District
PM_{10}	Respirable particulate matter
$PM_{2.5}$	Fine particulate matter
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
Program	Vehicle Miles Traveled Exchange Program
RAQS	Regional Air Quality Strategy
RMS	root-mean-square
RWQCB	regional water quality control board
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SB	Senate Bill
SDAB	San Diego Air Basin
SDAPCD	San Diego County Air Pollution Control District
SDG&E	San Diego Gas & Electric
SLT	screening level threshold
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
SWPPP	storm water pollution prevention plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TUA	Traditional Use Area
VdB	vibration decibels
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compounds

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 VMT EXCHANGE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City of Encinitas (City) proposes to adopt a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Exchange Program (Program) – a voluntary program in which discretionary development applicants can participate to reduce the amount of VMT generated by their individual development projects. This Program is the "project" evaluated in this Initial Study/Proposed Negative Declaration (IS/proposed ND).

The Program would provide applicants with the option to reduce potentially significant VMT impacts identified through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process if they agree to construct specified VMT-reducing projects that have been identified by the City. The Program would provide applicants with the option to implement high- and medium-priority Exchange Program projects, which include pedestrian network and bicycle network improvements that are located within existing developed rights-of-way in the City. The Program would be implemented over time and the projects available for VMT mitigation would be expanded as City resources and/or new options become available.

If the Program is adopted, any VMT-reducing projects that an applicant voluntarily elects to implement would be adopted as mitigation measures in the CEQA environmental review document for the applicable project. The Program would require that VMT-reducing projects be constructed as a condition of approval by the applicant before finalizing a building permit. Ongoing monitoring and tracking of the implementation of VMT-reducing projects would be included in the City's annual Climate Action Plan (CAP) implementation status report.

Chapter 2 "Project Description" presents the detailed Program information.

1.2 REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This IS/proposed ND has been prepared by the City of Encinitas to evaluate potential environmental effects resulting from the Program. This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.). An initial study is prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[a]), and thus to determine the appropriate environmental document. In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a "public agency shall prepare…a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration…when: (a) The Initial Study shows that there is no substantial evidence…that the project may have a significant impact on the environment, or (b) The Initial Study identifies potentially significant effects but revisions to the project plans or proposal are agreed to by the applicant and such revisions would reduce potentially significant effects to a less-than-significant level." In this circumstance, the lead agency prepares a written statement describing its reasons for concluding that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report ("EIR"). By contrast, an EIR is required when the project may have a significant environmental impact that cannot clearly be reduced to a less-than-significant effect by adoption of mitigation or by revisions in the project design.

1.3 WHY THIS DOCUMENT?

As described in the environmental checklist (Chapter 3), the Program would not result in any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, an IS/proposed ND is the appropriate document for compliance with the requirements of CEQA. This IS/proposed ND conforms to these requirements and to the content requirements of State CEQA Guidelines Section 15071.

Under CEQA, the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over approval of the project. The City of Encinitas is the CEQA lead agency because they are responsible for adopting and implementing the Program, which is the "project" evaluated in this IS/proposed ND. The purpose of this document is to present to decision-makers and the public information about the environmental consequences of implementing the Program. This disclosure document is being made available to the public for review and comment. This IS/proposed ND will be available for a 30-day public review period from April 25, 2025, to May 27, 2025.

Supporting documentation referenced in this document is available for review at:

City of Encinitas
505 S. Vulcan Avenue
Encinitas, CA 92024

Comments should be addressed to:

Evan Jedynak
City of Encinitas
505 S. Vulcan Avenue
Encinitas, CA 92024

E-mail comments should be addressed to:

Evan Jedynak
ejedynak@encinitasca.gov

If you have questions regarding the IS/proposed ND, please call Evan Jedynak at: (760) 633-2686. If you wish to send written comments (including via e-mail), they must be postmarked by May 27, 2025.

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, the City may (1) adopt the ND and adopt the Program; (2) undertake additional environmental studies; or (3) abandon the Program.

1.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter 3 of this document contains the analysis and discussion of potential environmental impacts of the Program using the sample initial study checklist questions provided in Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines. The evaluation demonstrates that the Program would have either no impacts or less-than-significant impacts for all of the environmental topics evaluated, which are as follows:

- aesthetics,
- agriculture and forest resources,
- air quality,
- biological resources,
- cultural resources,
- energy,
- geology and soils,
- greenhouse gas emissions,
- hazards and hazardous materials,
- hydrology and water quality,
- land use and planning,
- mineral resources,
- noise,
- population and housing,
- public services,
- recreation,
- transportation,
- tribal cultural resources,
- utilities and service systems, and
- wildfire.

1.5 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This IS/proposed ND is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides an introduction to the environmental review process. It describes the purpose and organization of this document as well as presents a summary of findings.

Chapter 2: Project Description and Background. This chapter presents an overview and background of the Program, provides a detailed description of the Program, and identifies Program objectives.

Chapter 3: Environmental Checklist. This chapter analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the Program using the sample initial study checklist questions provided in Appendix G to the State CEQA Guidelines.

Chapter 4: References. This chapter lists the references used in preparation of this IS/proposed ND.

Chapter 5: List of Preparers. This chapter identifies report preparers.

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2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter presents a description of the Program, including the types of VMT-reducing projects that could be implemented if the Program is adopted.

2.1 BACKGROUND

Traditionally, Level of Service (LOS) has been used as the primary transportation analysis metric under CEQA. However, in 2013 the Legislature passed legislation that ultimately eliminated LOS in most instances as a basis for environmental analysis under CEQA. Senate Bill (SB) 743, which was signed into law in 2013, required the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) (formerly known as Governor's Office of Planning and Research) to develop a new State CEQA guideline to address transportation metrics under CEQA; thus, changing how lead agencies evaluate transportation impacts under CEQA.

Enacted as part of Senate Bill 743 (2013), Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21099, subdivision (b)(1), directed Governor's Office of Planning and Research to prepare, develop, and transmit to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency for certification and adoption proposed CEQA Guidelines addressing "criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects within transit priority areas. Those criteria shall promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses." Subdivision (b)(2) of PRC Section 21099 further provides that "[u]pon certification of the guidelines by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency pursuant to this section, automobile delay, as described solely by level of service or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment pursuant to [CEQA], except in locations specifically identified in the guidelines, if any."

On December 28, 2018, the California Resources Agency certified and adopted updates to the CEQA Guidelines which included the adoption of California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15064.3, "Determining the Significance of Transportation Impacts." Pursuant to CCR Section 15064.3, automobile delay and similar metrics relating to vehicular roadway capacity and traffic congestion were eliminated as the basis for determining significant impacts, effectively being replaced with VMT as the primary metric to identify transportation related impacts under CEQA. This fundamental shift to the manner in which transportation impacts are considered under CEQA has led to the need for the development and application of new VMT-based mitigation strategies and options.

Various strategies are available to mitigate transportation impacts from VMT-inducing projects. Direct mitigation strategies are generally applied either directly at a project site in the form of a transportation demand management (TDM) plan and/or on-site improvements (e.g., bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facility improvements). TDM strategies are methods of reducing VMT by changing travel behavior, and commonly include commute reduction programs such as carpooling, vanpools, and telecommuting options; subsidized transit passes; parking cash-out programs; reductions in on-site parking spaces; on-site bike racks and showers; and providing school bus services. These direct mitigation strategies are generally most effective in areas with higher land use density, a greater diversity of land uses, and where multiple travel modes are available (e.g., walking, bicycling, and taking public transit). Although on-site multi-modal improvements are commonly used to mitigate VMT impacts, the most effective manner to mitigate VMT through the provision of multi-modal facilities is via comprehensive network improvements that would more than likely be located outside of individual project sites and within the public right-of-way. Therefore, using multi-modal facilities to mitigate VMT related impacts is best done at the programmatic level. Common program-based approaches include:

- VMT Impact Fee Programs: This type of program allows a developer to pay a VMT impact fee that goes toward funding a capital improvement program, consisting largely of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects.
- VMT Exchange Programs: This type of program allows a developer to offset transportation impacts from a VMT-generating project by implementing an off-site VMT-reducing project.

- VMT Mitigation Banks: This type of program allows a developer to purchase VMT reduction credits that can be applied to fund local, regional, or state-level VMT reduction projects or actions.

The City determined that a VMT Exchange Program would best fit the needs of Encinitas. The City commissioned a technical report, entitled *City of Encinitas VMT Exchange Program Documentation* (Fehr & Peers 2025), which provides justification for creating the VMT Exchange Program, identifies the projects that would be available under the VMT Exchange Program, and quantifies the VMT reduction that each project would achieve. The technical report identifies high priority and medium priority VMT-reducing projects that would be included as part of the City's overall VMT Exchange Program. During the periodic review process, City staff will administratively incorporate minor amendments to the exchange project list such as adding new bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

All projects listed in this Program are additional to the roadway network; they do not exist today and are not contained in a funded improvement program. Projects identified through this Exchange Program cannot include maintenance of existing facilities, however, upgrading an existing facility beyond standard requirements is an eligible project of this VMT Exchange Program.

2.2 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been identified for the Program:

- Provide a list of community-based transportation projects and programs that can be selected to be full or partial mitigation for a transportation VMT impact pursuant to CEQA.
- Establish a framework that supports the development of facilities and infrastructure to support the City's future transportation needs.
- Reduce Citywide VMT to help meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets identified in the City's CAP (City of Encinitas 2020).

2.3 PROGRAM LOCATION

The City of Encinitas is located in northern San Diego County, approximately 25 miles north of Downtown San Diego, along the coast of the Pacific Ocean (Figure 2-1). The city spans approximately 20 square miles within its incorporated boundaries. The City of Encinitas is bordered on the north by the City of Carlsbad, on the east by the unincorporated community of Olivenhain and the City of San Marcos, on the south by the City of Solana Beach, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. Interstate 5 runs north-south through Encinitas, providing regional access to the City.

The program area encompasses incorporated areas within Encinitas's City limits (Figure 2-2). All VMT-reducing projects included in the Program would be located within developed roadway rights-of-way in the City.

Sources: Data downloaded from SanGIS in 2021 and San Diego County in 2023; adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 2-1 Regional Location

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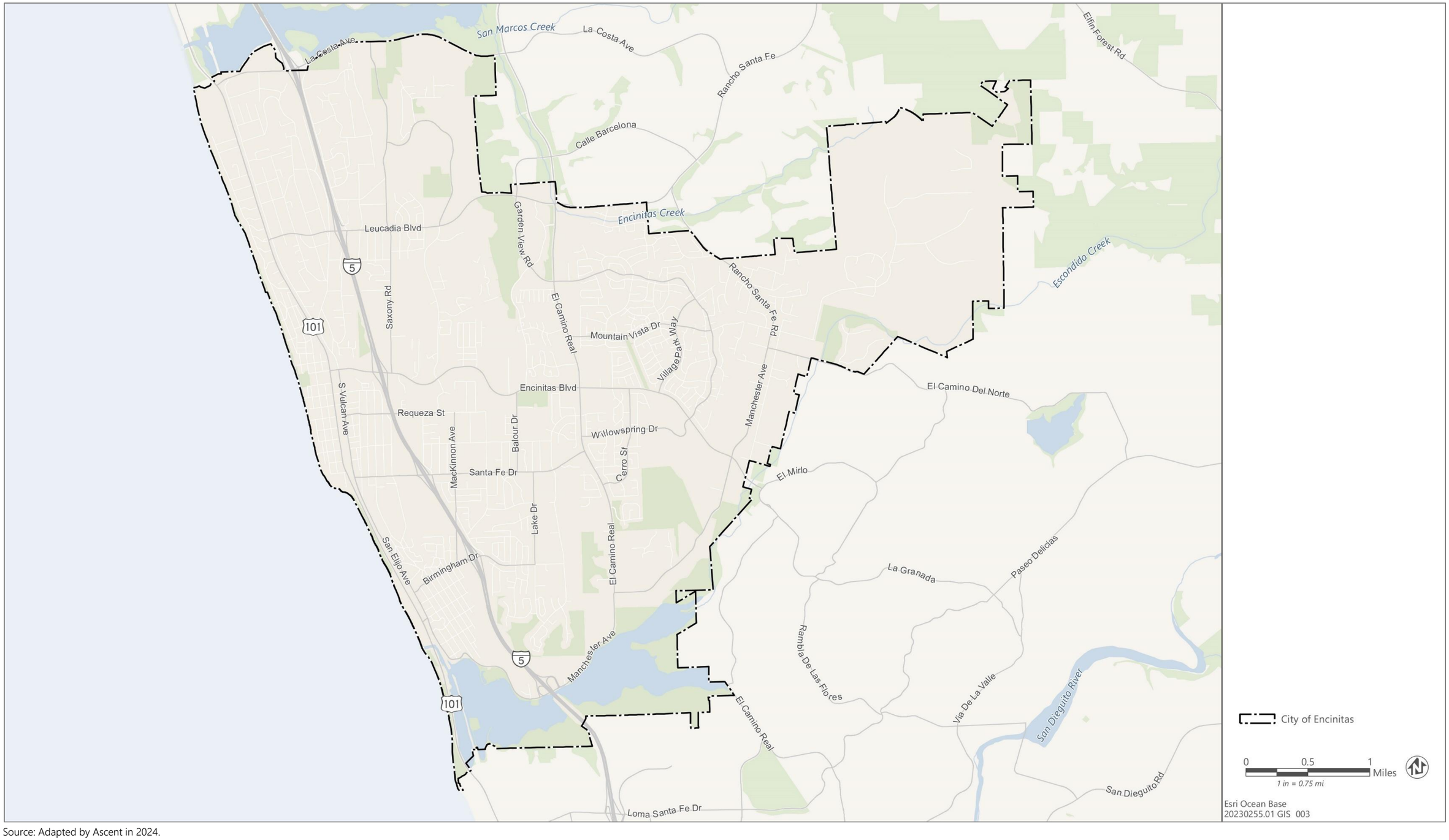


Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 2-2 Project Location

2.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM

As required under SB 743, an applicant would perform a transportation VMT analysis to determine if a development project would result in a potentially significant transportation VMT impact under CEQA. If a potentially significant impact under CEQA is identified, an applicant may choose to fully mitigate the impact using projects identified in this VMT Exchange Program, site-specific mitigation measures outside of the VMT Exchange Program, or a combination of site-specific measures plus the use of the VMT Exchange Program to reduce the project's VMT. If a significant impact remains after applying on-site mitigation, the applicant would have the option to utilize the Program for full or partial mitigation of the impact. The Program would consist of projects that applicants can construct in exchange for VMT reductions that can be applied to individual development projects.

As part of the Program, the applicant would consult with City Development Services Staff to discuss which VMT-reducing projects could be constructed to reduce VMT impacts. VMT-reducing projects would fall within the following categories: pedestrian network and bicycle network (See Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 below for additional discussion). The Program includes high-priority and medium-priority VMT-reducing projects (Table 2-1). An applicant may select a project from the project list in Table 2-1. Alternatively, applicants may propose VMT-reducing projects at other locations beyond those listed in Table 2-1.

The process for an applicant to choose a project from the list is as follows:

1. Communicate with Engineering Staff that the development project has a significant transportation VMT impact, as indicated in the completed Scoping Agreement, and that the applicant would like to utilize the Exchange Program for full or partial mitigation of the impact.
2. Engineering Staff will discuss options with the applicant. The available VMT-reducing projects from the Exchange Program will be reviewed and identified based on feasibility and consideration of the following priorities:
    a. Select an exchange project from the High-Priority category that is near the development project (within ½ mile travel distance from the development project) and connects the project or existing community to an existing pedestrian, bicycle, or transit corridor.
    b. If no exchange project is identified based on criteria (a), select an exchange project from the High-Priority category that is within ½ mile travel distance of a school and connects the school to an existing pedestrian, bicycle, or transit corridor.
    c. If no exchange project is identified based on criteria (a) or (b), expand the geography to citywide and select an exchange project from the High-Priority category that facilitates bicycle or pedestrian access to key destinations (school, park, beach, community center, or shopping).
    d. If no exchange project is identified based on criteria (a), (b), or (c), then select an exchange project from the Medium-Priority category that facilitates bicycle or pedestrian access to key destinations (school, park, beach, community center, or shopping).
3. The applicant is responsible for designing and constructing the selected project. Coordination with City staff to obtain necessary permits is required.

Adoption of the Program would not directly result in changes to the physical environment; however, individual VMT-reducing projects would result in improvements to the existing transportation network. Physical improvements would vary depending on the type of VMT-reducing project an applicant selects. In general, physical improvements may include installing new painted or raised crosswalks or mid-block crossings; new painted or raised medians; new curb extensions, curb ramps, pedestrian refuge islands, or other modifications to existing curbs, gutters and drainage inlets; raised intersections; new colored concrete and/or colored pavement; new signage; re-striped vehicle lanes; new landscaping; new traffic signals; and new rapid rectangular flashing beacons. In addition, physical improvements may include modifying traffic signals (e.g., new phase for people on bikes/walking), repaving the roadway surface

(e.g., slurry seal), adding new street lighting, marking new bike lanes or upgrading existing bike lanes, and implementing similar minor physical improvements. Some of these physical improvements would require limited ground disturbance within existing, developed roadway rights-of-way. Some improvements may require relocating existing above-ground utilities (e.g., powerlines or utility boxes) or stormwater infrastructure (e.g., curb, gutter, and drains).

Table 2-1 VMT Exchange Program – High-Priority Project List

#	Project	Unit (mile)	Daily VMT Reduction
High-Priority Projects			
Pedestrian Network Improvements: Increase Sidewalk Coverage			
1_1	Fill in sidewalks between El Portal St and A Street on the Coast Highway 101	0.8	60
1_2	Fill in sidewalks between Chesterfield Drive and ~600 feet north of South Cardiff Beach on Coast Highway 101	0.8	60
1_3	Fill in sidewalks on Lake Drive between Santa Fe Drive and Cardiff Drive	0.5	38
1_4	Fill in sidewalks from Ecke Ranch Road to Kristen Court on Qual Gardens Drive	0.5	38
1_5	Fill in sidewalks on Saxony Road where gaps exist on both sides of the street from Leucadia Boulevard to 160 feet south of Saxony Place	0.5	38
1_6	Construct a decomposed granite pedestrian path on the north side of Union Street from Saxony Road to terminus at Interstate 5	0.3	23
1_7	Fill in sidewalks on Leucadia Boulevard from its western terminus about 100 feet from beach access to Leucadia State Beach.	0.5	38
1_8	Fill in sidewalks on the east side of Saxony Road for approximately 1,000 feet south of La Costa Avenue.	0.2	15
1_9	Fill in missing sidewalks in an area of high pedestrian activity on Coast Highway 101 from J Street to 1,500 south of K Street	0.1	8
1_10	Fill in missing sidewalks on the western side of Nardo Road between Santa Fe Drive and Melba Road	0.3	23
1_11	Construct sidewalks along Mozart Avenue, Westminster Drive, Montgomery Avenue, Rossini Drive, Stafford Avenue and Cambridge Avenue between Manchester Avenue and Brighton Avenue	0.3	23
1_12	Construct sidewalks on Saxony Road from just north of Quail Hollow Drive to Leucadia Boulevard	1.5	113
1_13	Fill in missing sidewalks on F Street/Requeza Street from South Vulcan Avenue to Devonshire Drive	0.3	23
1_14	Fill in missing sidewalks on the west side of Nardo Road, between Requeza Street and approximately 200 feet north of Herder Lane. The northern terminus of this section is at the entry and exit point of Sunset Academy's parking lot.	0.2	15
1_15	Fill in missing sidewalks on Melba Road between Crest Drive and Balour Drive. Fill in missing sidewalks on Balour Drive between Melba Road and Santa Fe Drive.	0.5	38
1_16	Fill in the missing sidewalk on Crest Drive between Melba Road and Santa Fe Drive	0.5	38
Bicycle Network Improvements: Increase Bike Facility Coverage			
2_1	Provide a Class II bicycle lane on San Elijo Avenue from Chesterfield Drive to Kilkenny Drive	0.8	72
2_2	Provide a Class III facility to provide connectivity from Vulcan Avenue to Hygeia Avenue, where there currently are disjointed roadway segments on Union Street, Hermes Avenue, and Cereus Avenue	0.7	35
2_3	Provide Class III bike facility on Lake Drive from Santa Fe Drive to Birmingham Drive	1.5	75

#	Project	Unit (mile)	Daily VMT Reduction
2_4	Provide Class II bike facility along Ocean Crest Road, Justin Road, and Munevar Road in the Cardiff community	0.8	72
2_5	Provide a Class II buffered bicycle lane on Leucadia Boulevard from Coast Highway 101 to Piraeus Street to provide access from east of Interstate 5 to within one-tenth of a mile from Beacons (Leucadia State Beach).	1.3	117
2_6	Provide a Class II bike facility on Piraeus Street from Leucadia Boulevard to just north of Ocean View, the location where motor vehicles are navigating the freeway on-ramps to Interstate 5. Construct a Class II bike facility on Piraeus Street from Olympus Street to Christine Place by replacing the existing sharrows with a dedicated bicycle lane	0.6	54
2_7	Provide a Class III bike facility on Union Street from Interstate 5 to Saxony Road as a connector to the north-south Class II bicycle lane on Saxony Road	0.6	30
2_8	Provide a Class II bicycle lane on Via Montoro from Via Cantebria to El Camino Real to connect residential neighborhoods to restaurants and retail.	0.8	72
2_9	Provide a Class II buffered bicycle lane to replace the existing bicycle lane on Mountain Vista Drive from El Camino Real to Jolina Way.	0.2	18
Medium-Priority Projects			
Pedestrian Network Improvements: Increase Sidewalk Coverage			
	Projects identified in the Active Transportation Plan but not included in the cells above [a]	per 1 mile of new sidewalk	75 VMT
Bicycle Network Improvements: Increase Bike Facility Coverage			
	New Class IV bikeway projects identified in the Active Transportation Plan but not included in the cells above [a]	1 mile (bi-directional)	130 VMT
	New Class II bicycle lane projects identified in the Active Transportation Plan but not included in the cells above [a]	1 mile (bi-directional)	90 VMT
	New Class III bicycle boulevard projects identified in the Active Transportation Plan but not included in the cells above [a]	1 mile (bi-directional)	50 VMT

Notes:

[a] Selected locations must be reviewed by City staff to ensure that VMT benefits are comparable to similar locations identified by the City.

Source: Fehr & Peers 2025.

2.4.1 Pedestrian Network Improvements

The Program would include projects to improve the pedestrian network by increasing sidewalk coverage throughout Encinitas, with the objective of increasing access to surrounding land uses (see Table 2-1). These pedestrian network improvements have been classified as high-priority and medium-priority pedestrian projects (Figures 2-3 and 2-4, respectively). Applicants may propose locations for pedestrian projects other than those listed in Table 2-1; however, the locations must be reviewed by City Staff before applying VMT reductions to ensure that the locations are comparable to those identified in Table 2-1, result in increased pedestrian activity, and meet the priority conditions described above (a, b, c, or d), as listed in in order of priority.

2.4.2 Bicycle Network Improvements

The Program would include projects to increase the number of bicycle facilities or quality of existing bicycle facilities (see Table 2-1). Projects include the construction of new Class II facilities (marked bicycle lanes within roadways), Class III facilities (on-street bike route shared with vehicles, marked by signage but without dedicated lanes), and Class IV facilities (protected bicycle lane that is separated from motor traffic with a physical barrier). These bicycle network

improvements have been classified as high-priority and medium-priority bicycle facility projects (Figures 2-5 and 2-6, respectively). Applicants may select a location from the bicycle network gaps/opportunities within existing roadway rights-of-way identified in the following City planning documents if the location is not already funded by a different source:

- *Active Transportation Plan* (2018);
- *General Plan* (*Recreation Element* (2003), *Circulation Element* (2018), *Land-use Element* (2019);
- *Downtown Specific Plan* (1994);
- *Cardiff-By-The-Sea Specific Plan* (1994);
- *Encinitas Ranch Specific Plan* (1994);
- *North 101 Corridor Specific Plan* (1997);
- *Climate Action Plan* (2018);
- *Rail Corridor Cross-Connect Implementation Plan* (2020);
- *Modal Alternative Project* (2023);
- *Capital Improvement Program* (2024); and
- *Infrastructure Task Force* (2024).

The City may also require the applicant to provide evidence of how the proposed bicycle facility would connect existing bicycle facilities or key destinations, based on the conditions described above (a, b, c, or d), thus contributing to increased bicycling and reduced VMT.

2.5 CONSTRUCTION

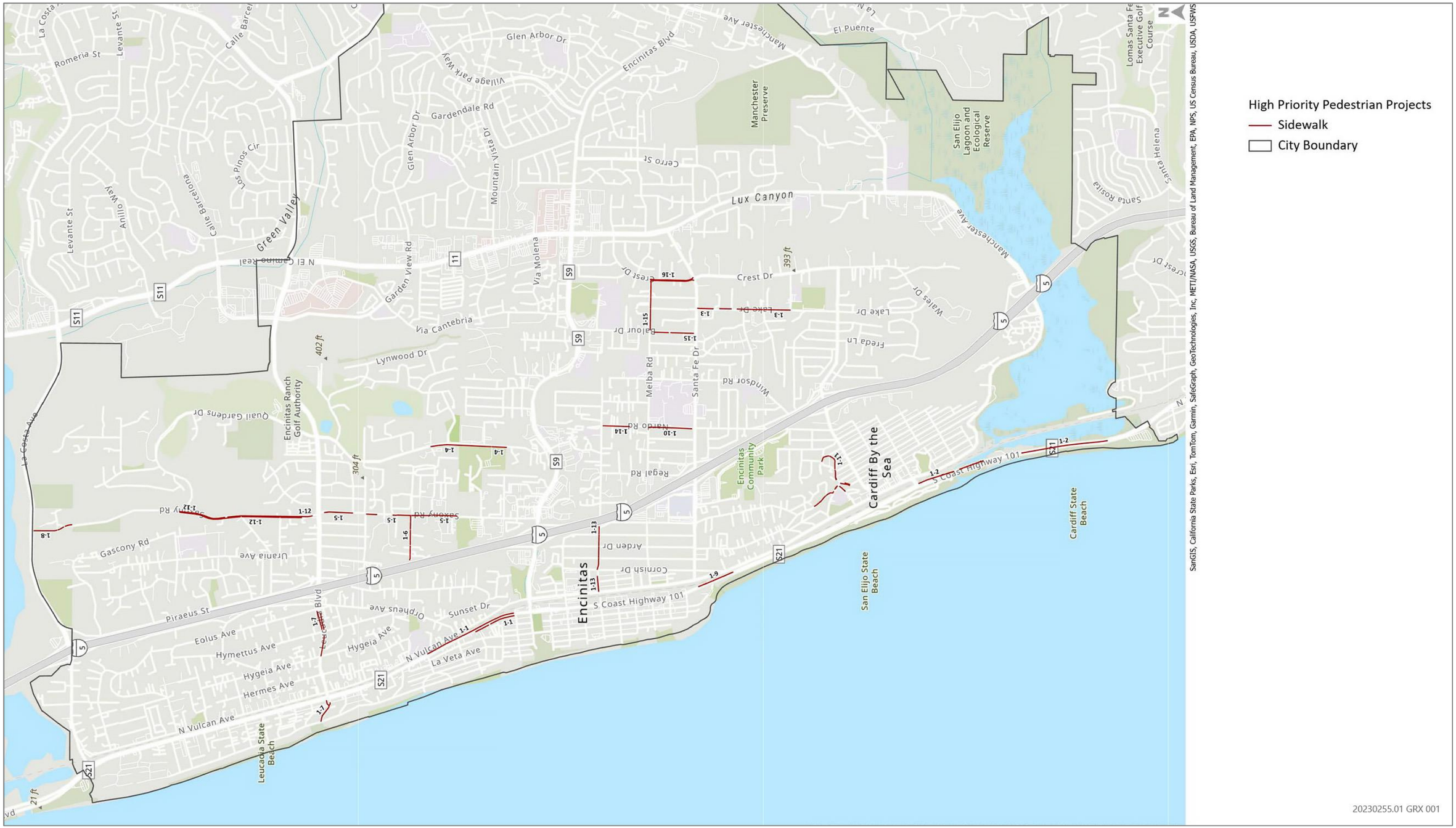
In general, construction activities for each VMT-reducing project would last for approximately 1 to 2 weeks and would be completed in the following phases:

- Demolition (1-2 days): Sawcutting and removing existing hardscape.
- Grading (1 day): Minor grading, surface preparation, and compaction.
- Concrete (2-5 days): Placing concrete formwork and reinforcement, placing and finishing concrete, and stripping formwork.
- Paving (1 day): Installing asphalt concrete pavement.
- Striping (1 day): Striping and placing signs and pavement markers.

Construction Equipment used for VMT-reducing projects may include concrete saws, a backhoe or mini excavator, skip loader, smooth drum roller, and dump truck. Additionally, a striping and paving machine may be required for some bicycle network improvement projects. On average, linear improvements would be completed at a rate of 250 to 350 feet per day.

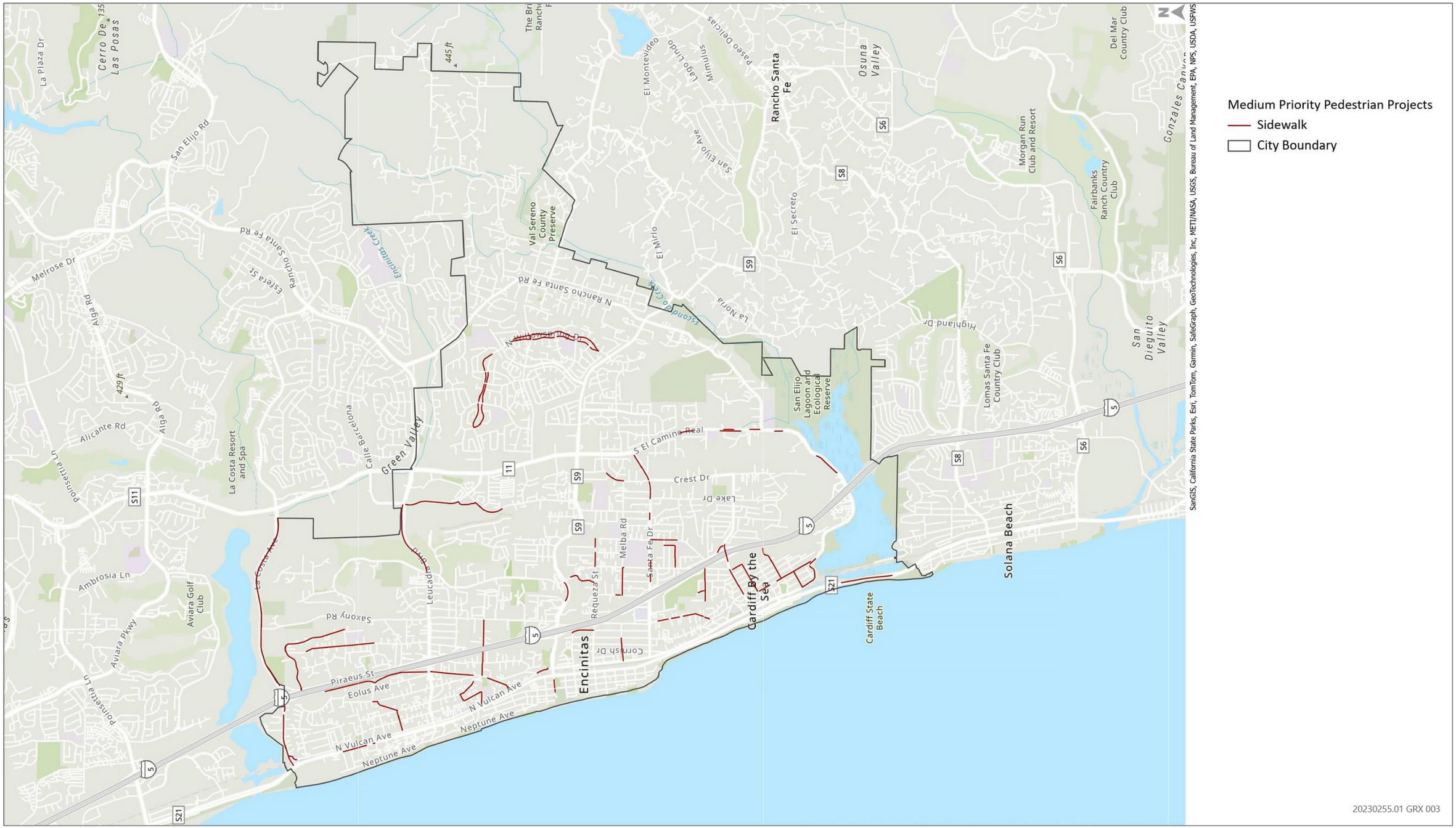
2.6 REQUIRED APPROVALS

The City of Encinitas is the CEQA lead agency responsible for considering adoption and implementation of the Program. As the lead agency under CEQA, the City is responsible for considering the adequacy of the IS/Proposed ND before determining if the overall Program should be adopted.



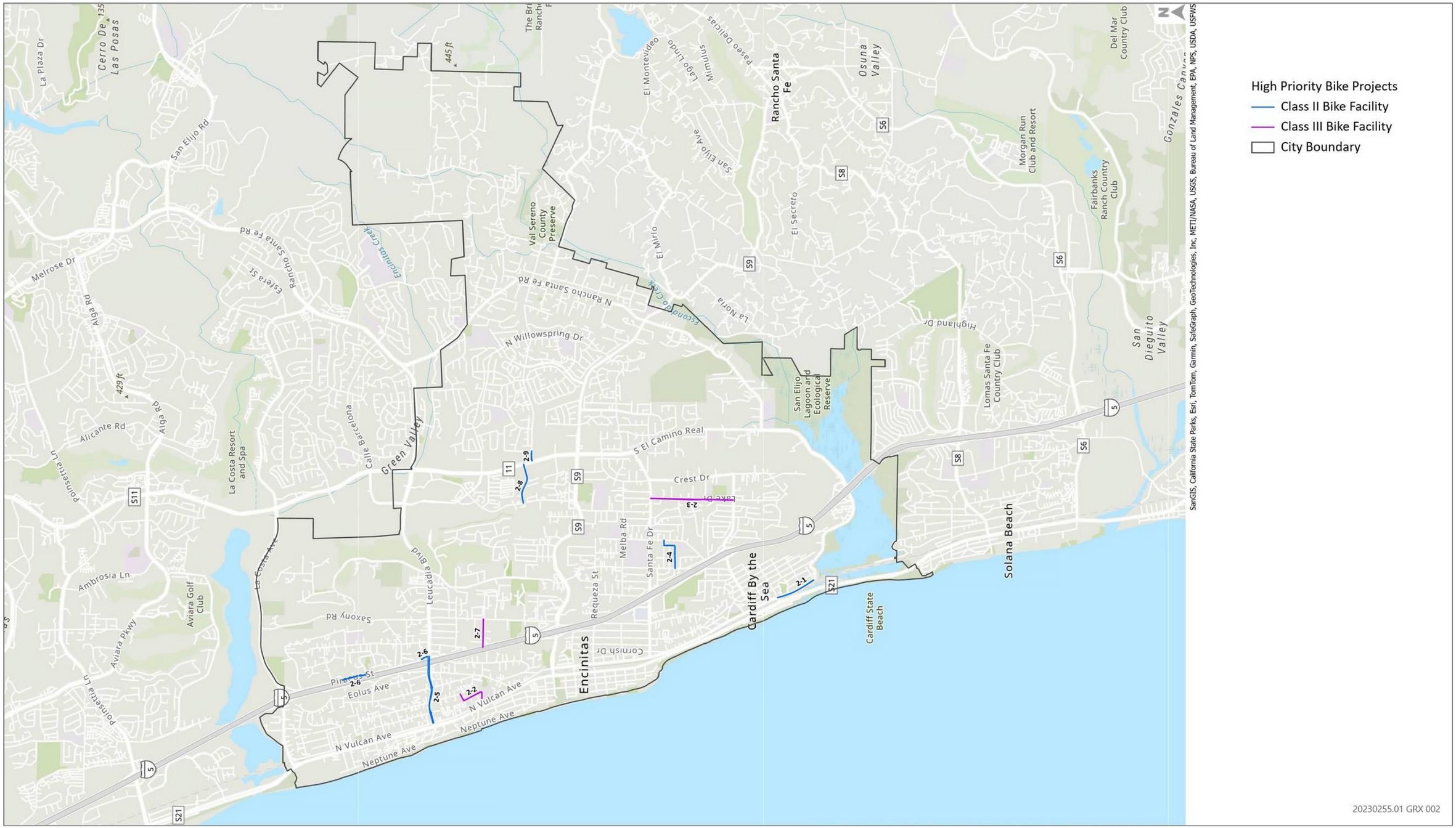
Source: Image produced and provided by Fehr & Peers in 2024; adapted by Ascent in 2024.

Figure 2-3 High-Priority Pedestrian Projects



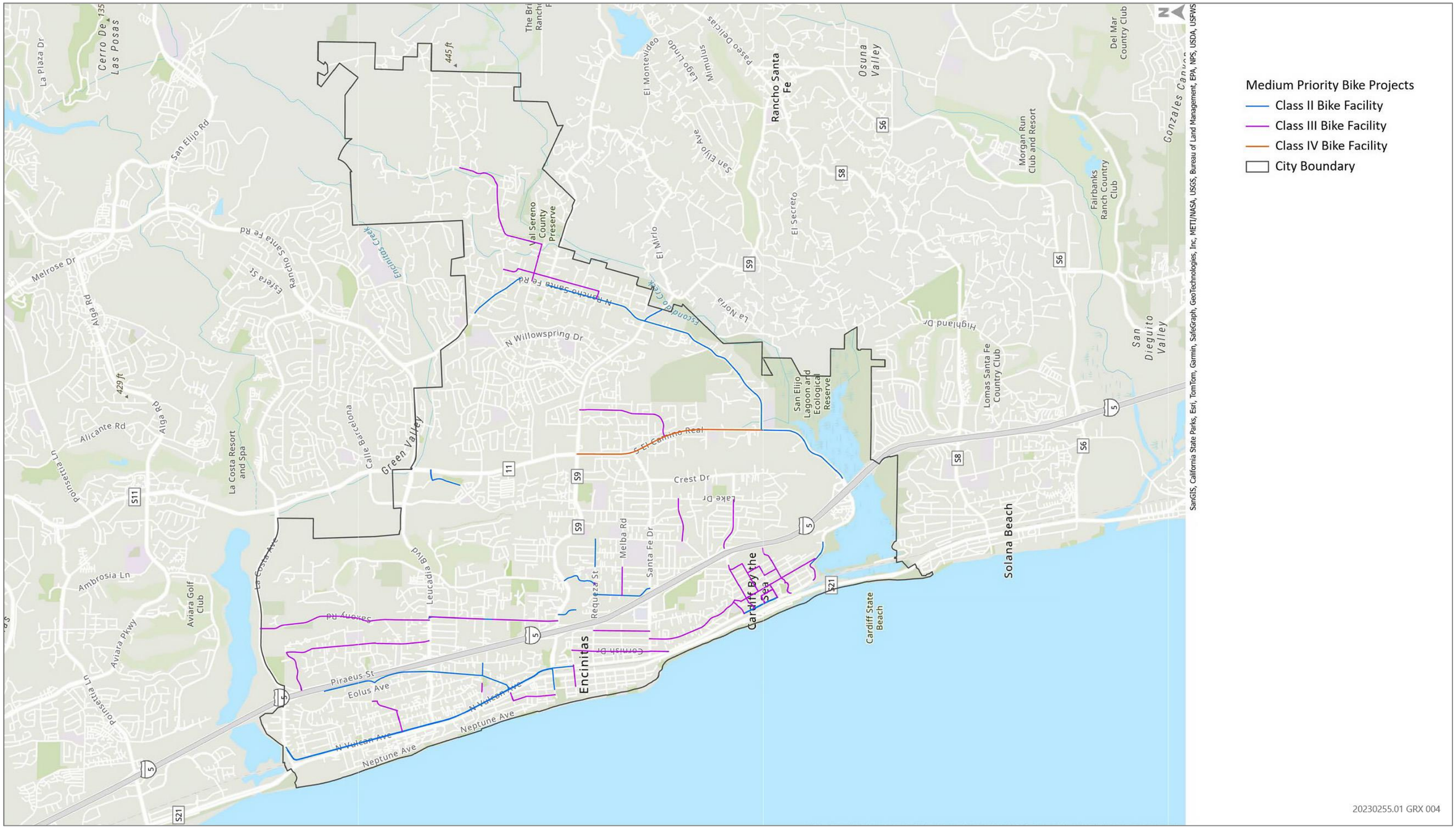
Source: Image produced and provided by Fehr & Peers in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 2-4 Medium-Priority Pedestrian Projects



Source: Image produced and provided by Fehr & Peers in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 2-5 High-Priority Bicycle Facility Projects



Source: Image produced and provided by Fehr & Peers in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 2-6 Medium-Priority Bicycle Facility Projects

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Vehicle Miles Traveled Exchange Program

2. Lead Agency Name and Address: City of Encinitas
   Planning Division
   505 S. Vulcan Avenue
   Encinitas, CA 92024

3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Evan Jedynak
   (760) 633-2686, ejedynak@encinitasca.gov

4. Project Location: City of Encinitas

5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: Same as Lead Agency

6. General Plan Designation: Various

7. Zoning: Various

8. Description of Project:
   The proposed Program is a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Exchange Program (Program) – a voluntary program in which discretionary development applicants can participate to reduce the amount of VMT generated by their projects. The Program will also provide applicants with the option to reduce potentially significant VMT impacts identified through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process by constructing specified VMT-reducing projects that have been identified by the City. The Program would provide applicants with the option to implement high- and medium-priority program projects, which include pedestrian network and bicycle network improvements that are located within existing developed rights of way.

   If the Program is adopted, any VMT-reducing projects that an applicant voluntarily elects to implement would be adopted as mitigation measures in the CEQA environmental review document for the applicable project. The Program would require that VMT-reducing projects be constructed as a condition of approval by the applicant before finalizing a building permit. Ongoing monitoring and tracking of the implementation of VMT-reducing projects would be included in the City's annual CAP implementation status report.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:
   The City of Encinitas is located in northern San Diego County (North County), approximately 25 miles north of Downtown San Diego. Encinitas is bounded on the north by the City of Carlsbad, on the east by the City of San Marcos and the unincorporated community of Olivenhain, on the south by the City of Solana Beach, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:
    None

11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

In compliance with PRC section 21080.3.1, the City provided formal written notification of the Program on December 19, 2024. As of the publication of this IS/proposed ND, no tribes have requested consultation. The Pala Band of Mission Indians and Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians provided comments, which are addressed in Section 3.18, "Tribal Cultural Resources".

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS REQUIRING AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

If one or more boxes are checked for environmental topics below it means that the Program would result in at least one "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages, and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required. If the box is checked for "None" or "None with Mitigation Incorporated" then preparation of an EIR is not required, and a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration may be prepared.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forest Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology / Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards / Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology / Water Quality	☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities / Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance
	☒ None	☐ None with Mitigation Incorporated

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☒ I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature _____ Date 4-21-25

Printed Name Evan Jedynak Title Senior Mobility Planner

Agency City of Encinitas

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.1 AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. Aesthetics.				
Except as provided in Public Resources Code section 21099 (where aesthetic impacts shall not be considered significant for qualifying residential, mixed-use residential, and employment centers), would the Program:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Encinitas is situated along 6 miles of Pacific coastline in northern San Diego County. Topography is characterized by cliffs, coastal beaches, flat topped coastal areas, rolling hills and steep mesa bluffs. The Batiquitos Lagoon is located in the north and the San Elijo Lagoon to the south of the City. The project area is primarily developed, with some natural open spaces.

Scenic vista points include areas that are currently vista points as well as areas to be acquired and developed as vista points, such as (City of Encinitas 2011):

- Vista points to be acquired and developed:
  - San Elijo and Kilkenny (overlooking lagoon and coast)
  - Highway 101, north of La Costa Avenue
  - Northeast and northwest corner of Interstate 5 and La Costa Avenue
  - Encinitas Community Park site
- Vista points to be developed and maintained:
  - Orpheus Street Park site
  - Oak Crest Park site
  - West end of "D" Street
  - West end of "F" Street
  - West end of "H" Street

- West end of "J" Street

- Vista points to be maintained and upgraded as necessary:
  - Leucadia Beach State Park
  - Cardiff Sports Park
  - West end of "I" Street
  - Moonlight State Beach
  - Swami's City Park
  - Existing Vista Point on southbound Interstate 5
  - Cardiff Beach State Park (south parking lot)
  - Self-Realization Fellowship

Critical viewsheds are defined in the Resource Management Element as those areas that extend radially for 2,000 feet from the vista point and cover areas upon which development could potentially obstruct, limit, or degrade the view (City of Encinitas 2011).

The Resource Management Element also designates the following roads as scenic highway/visual corridor viewsheds (City of Encinitas 2011):

- Saxony Road, from Leucadia Boulevard, north to La Costa Avenue;
- Highway 101 from Encinitas Boulevard south to Santa Fe Drive;
- El Camino Real from La Costa Boulevard south to Manchester Avenue;
- Highway 101, La Costa Avenue, to South Carlsbad Beach;
- La Costa Avenue, from just west of Interstate 5 to El Camino Real;
- Highway 101, from Encinitas Boulevard to La Costa Avenue;
- Leucadia Boulevard, between Highway 101 and El Camino Real;
- San Elijo Avenue (and Highway 101) south of Cardiff Beach State Park to Santa Fe Drive;
- Manchester Avenue from San Elijo Avenue to Encinitas Boulevard;
- Interstate 5, crossing San Elijo Lagoon;
- Rancho Santa Fe Road within Olivenhain;
- Lone Jack Road from Rancho Santa Fe Road to Lone Hill Lane; and
- Santa Fe Drive from South Vulcan Avenue to El Camino Real.

Interstate 5 is designated as an eligible state scenic highway through the City of Encinitas from the City of San Diego where Interstate 5 intersects with State Route 75 to the City of San Juan Capistrano where Interstate 5 intersects with State Route 74 (Caltrans 2024). Scenic view corridors designated by the General Plan are located along Interstate 5, San Elijo Avenue near the lagoon east along Manchester Avenue, west of Rancho Santa Fe Road at Avenida La Posta, east and west of El Camino Real from Garden View Road to the north side of Leucadia Boulevard, and south of La Costa Avenue in the northeast corner of the Leucadia community boundary (City of Encinitas 2016).

Light and glare conditions within developed portions of the program area are typical of those associated with urban uses. Daytime lighting primarily comes from natural sunlight, with additional sources including streetlights, vehicle headlights, and lighting from commercial and residential properties. During the day, reflections from glass facades and building materials can contribute to localized glare, though it typically has minimal impact due to the abundance of ambient daylight. At night, artificial lighting from residential, commercial, and public spaces becomes the primary

source of illumination, with streetlights and exterior building lights creating noticeable lighting along main corridors such as Coast Highway 101 and Encinitas Boulevard. Certain areas in Encinitas, such as Olivenhain, Batiquitos Lagoon, and San Elijo Lagoon, experience lower levels of light and glare due to minimal artificial lighting to preserve rural character and protect natural habitats. Coastal bluffs along the Pacific Ocean also have reduced lighting to limit light pollution and support nocturnal wildlife.

3.1.2 Discussion

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than significant. Adoption of the Program would not directly result in changes to the physical environment; however, VMT-reducing projects would result in short-term construction and long-term changes to the physical environment. Implementation of the Program would result in improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network within existing roadway rights-of-way. Specific types of VMT-reducing projects include increasing sidewalk coverage and constructing new bicycle facilities. These improvements would be implemented at or near grade level of existing roadways; would not involve substantial grading or earthwork with potential to alter landforms; and would not introduce new features with substantial height, bulk, or massing that could block or impede existing scenic vistas. In addition, the VMT-reducing projects would be located in already disturbed, urbanized areas where existing transportation infrastructure (e.g., paved roadways, sidewalks, parking lots) and urban development (e.g., buildings, pavement, ornamental landscaping) are predominant.

The activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects would introduce visual elements to public viewsheds, including heavy equipment, stored materials, and fencing. Construction activities would vary depending on the type of VMT-reducing project, but may involve removing existing pavement; repaving roadway surfaces; painting or restriping pavement; modifying curbs; laying concrete, and installing traffic signals, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and other amenities. Some of these improvements may require limited ground disturbance. Construction activities would be short-term and temporary, and would typically not involve equipment of substantial height, bulk, or massing that would alter existing scenic vistas. Following the construction period, construction equipment and materials would be removed from the program area. Therefore, construction-related effects on scenic vistas would not be substantial.

Thus, for all of the foregoing reasons, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. This impact is less than significant.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less than significant. As shown on Figure 3.1-1, several VMT-reducing projects are proposed along locally designated scenic roadways in the City. Additionally, applicants may propose VMT-reducing projects at other locations throughout Encinitas, which may include City-designated scenic roadways.

Construction associated with VMT-reducing projects would introduce heavy equipment, staged materials, and fencing within City-designated scenic roadways. However, construction activities would be short-term and temporary. Additionally, construction activities would be limited to disturbed areas within roadway rights-of-way where no scenic resources are present. Furthermore, construction activities would adhere to the City of Encinitas Municipal Code (EMC) Section Chapter 23.24, Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control, which includes requirements for best management practices (BMPs) related to trash, debris, erosion, and perimeter control for construction activities. Thus, construction associated with VMT-reducing projects would not result in substantial damage to scenic resources along City-designated scenic roadways.

As discussed in Section 3.1.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These improvements would be implemented at or near grade level of existing roadways; would not involve substantial grading or earthwork with potential to alter landforms; and would not introduce new features with substantial height, bulk, or massing that could substantially damage scenic resources. In addition, the VMT-reducing

projects would be located in already disturbed, urbanized areas where existing transportation infrastructure is present. For all of the foregoing reasons, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not substantially damage scenic resources. This impact is less than significant.

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 publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less than significant. The VMT-reducing projects listed in Table 2-1 are located in urbanized areas within the City. Additionally, applicants may propose VMT-reducing projects at other locations throughout Encinitas, which would be within roadway rights-of-way in urbanized areas. Therefore, the following analysis evaluates the potential for VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

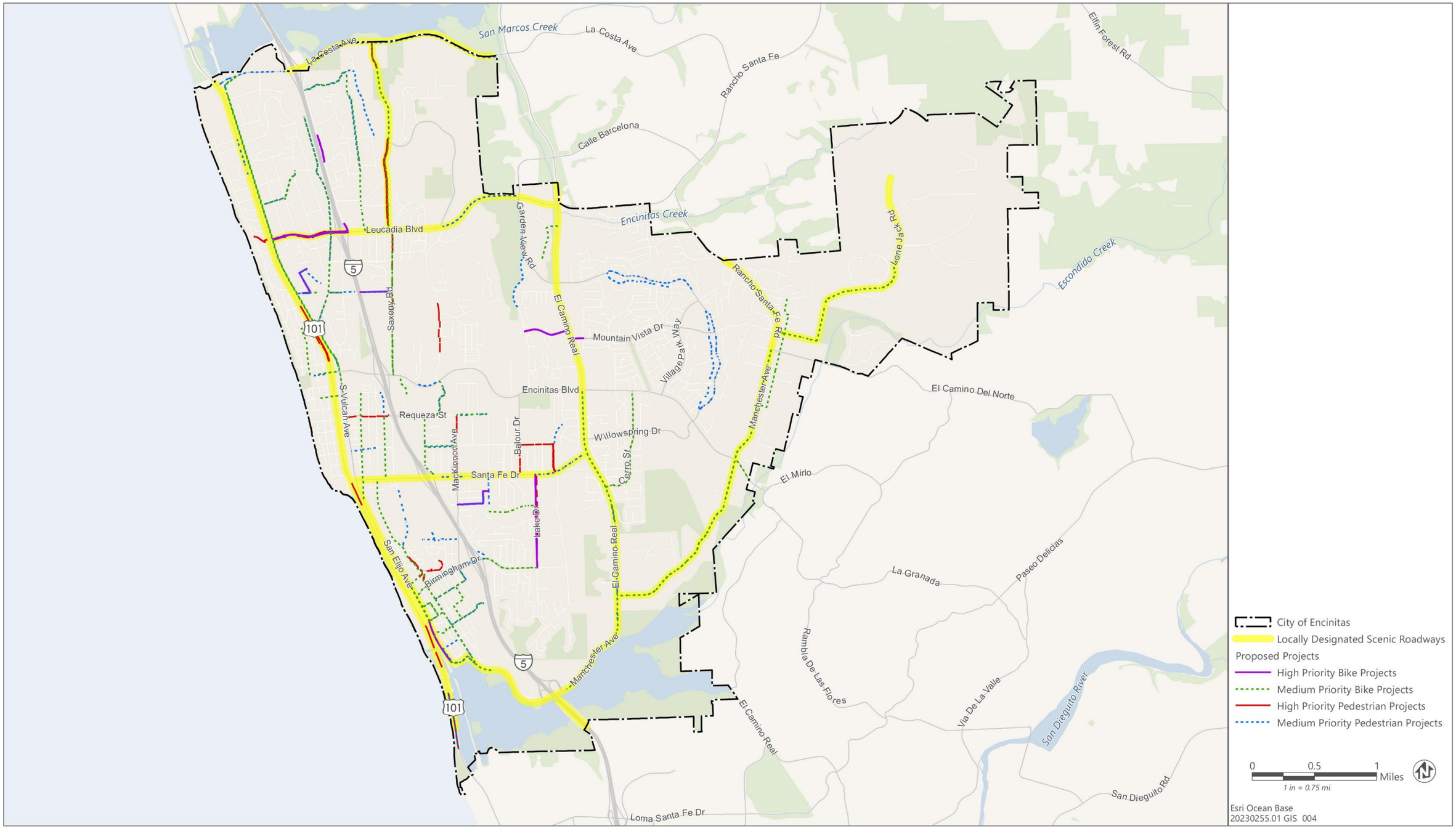
The Resource Management Element of the City's General Plan includes policies to protect visual resources that provide aesthetic value to the City and contribute to the City's identity. Additionally, the Encinitas Zoning Ordinance (EMC Title 30) contains Section 30.34.080, "Scenic/Visual Corridor Overlay Zone," which ensures that developments within designated scenic view corridors, significant viewsheds, and vista points are designed to minimize visual impacts through restrictions on bulk, mass, height, and design, while also preserving historic viewsheds based on community significance as determined by the Planning Commission. EMC Chapter 23.08 contains the City's Design Review process which ensures that developments align with the City's aesthetic goals, considering aspects such as architectural design, grading, and landscaping.

Additionally, the City's *Active Transportation Plan* and *Engineering Design Manual* provide standards for roadway improvements, sidewalk design, and bicycle facilities. These documents align with regional and state guidelines to ensure safety, connectivity, and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists while remaining consistent with the City's aesthetic goals.

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would be located within roadway rights-of-way where existing transportation infrastructure is present. Improvements would be implemented at or near grade level of existing roadways and would not involve substantial grading or earthwork with potential to alter landforms. In addition, these projects would not introduce new features with substantial height, bulk, or massing that could block or impede views of scenic resources. As discussed further in Section 3.1.2(d) below, these projects would not include substantial new lighting or surfaces that would contribute to outdoor light pollution or glare. Additionally, as discussed further in Section 3.5.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would not involve construction that would affect the integrity of historic resources. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer to ensure compliance with the City's *Active Transportation Plan* and *Engineering Design Manual* (City of Encinitas 2018, 2009). Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not conflict with policies in the City's General Plan or applicable zoning regulations governing scenic quality.

As described in Section 3.1.2(a), construction associated with VMT-reducing projects would introduce visual elements to public viewsheds, including heavy equipment, stored materials, and fencing. However, construction activities would be short-term and temporary; would not involve equipment of substantial height, bulk, or massing; and would comply with applicable City regulations governing construction activities. Following the construction period, construction equipment and materials would be removed from the program area. Therefore, construction activities would not conflict with policies in the City's General Plan or applicable zoning regulations governing scenic quality.

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. This impact is less than significant.



Source: Adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 3.1-1 Locally Designated Scenic Roadways

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than significant. The following sections describe the potential for the VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of Program to create substantial new sources of light and glare.

Light

As discussed in Section 3.1.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. Improvements to the pedestrian network could include new pedestrian activated crossing signals (e.g., rapid rectangular flashing beacons and pedestrian hybrid beacons) and upgraded pedestrian signals. These VMT-reducing projects would introduce new permanent light sources to the program area. The installation of permanent lighting would adhere to the California Building Standards Code (Title 24, Part 6), which includes measures for energy-efficient and environmentally conscious outdoor lighting. These measures aim to reduce light pollution, glare, and energy consumption while considering safety and functionality. Additionally, the subsequent projects under the Program would be required to comply with outdoor lighting requirements in the City's *Engineering Design Manual* and Zoning Code to ensure compatibility with community design and environmental considerations. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would be located in generally lit areas with existing street lighting, characteristic of a typical urban environment. Thus, operation of VMT-reducing projects would not create a new source of substantial light that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

In accordance with EMC Section 9.32.410, construction activities would be limited to Monday through Saturday between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Therefore, no nighttime lighting is anticipated during construction, unless a deviation in work days and hours has been obtained in advance from the Code Enforcement Manager. In the event that nighttime construction is approved by the Code Enforcement Manager, nighttime lighting would be directed on-site and away from adjacent light-sensitive receptors, such as residences, hotels, and hospitals. The introduction of light sources from construction activities would be short-term and temporary. Thus, construction activities would not create a new source of substantial light that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Glare

As discussed in Section 3.1.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. No sources of glare are expected to be introduced from these improvements. Thus, operation of VMT-reducing projects would not create a new source of substantial glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Construction associated with VMT-reducing projects could introduce glare from windshields of vehicles and construction equipment. The introduction of glare sources from construction activities would be minor, short-term, and temporary. Thus, construction activities would not create a new source of substantial glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Summary

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not create new sources of substantial light or glare. This impact is less than significant.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest Resources.				
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.				
In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the Program:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

Agricultural activities occur within the City on a small scale, particularly ornamental flower cultivation in commercial greenhouses, comprising approximately three (3) percent of total land use acreage. Other agricultural operations occur within the City in the form of private and community gardens. No large-scale, commercial agricultural cultivation occurs within the City, and no land is presently zoned for agriculture (City of Encinitas 2016). Likewise, the City does not contain any forest resources (City of Encinitas 2016); therefore, there are no lands currently used for timber production or management in the program area. No lands within the program area have a zoning designation for timberland or forest land.

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data to analyze impacts on agricultural resources. FMMP classifies different agricultural land

categories based on soil quality and suitability for agricultural uses including Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Grazing Land, and Urban and Built-Up Land. Most of the Program area is classified as Urban and Built-Up Land. A few smaller areas of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Unique Farmland are scattered around the Program area (DOC 2024a). These areas are currently occupied by small scale community farms, ornamental flower cultivation, and undeveloped land.

The Williamson Act was passed in 1965 to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. The Williamson Act enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. There are five parcels of Williamson Act Contract lands within the Program area (DOC 2024b).

3.2.2 Discussion

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?

and

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. The locations of VMT-reducing projects are identified in Table 2-1; however, applicants may propose VMT-reducing projects at other locations throughout Encinitas. VMT-reducing projects would generally be located in urbanized areas that are within a 0.5-mile travel distance of a proposed development project and in proximity to key destinations (e.g., existing parks, schools, community centers, or shopping centers). Additionally, the locations for VMT-reducing projects would be limited to disturbed areas within existing roadway rights-of-way that are classified as Urban and Built-Up Land and are not being used for agricultural production or enrolled in a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use; conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use; or breach the conditions of a Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur.

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))?

and

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No impact. There are no lands currently used for timber production or management in the program area and no lands that have a zoning designation for timberland or forest land. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not conflict with existing zoning or cause rezoning any forest land, timberland, or timber land zoned for timberland production. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

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. As described in Section 3.2.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would be in urbanized areas and would generally be within a 0.5-mile travel distance of a proposed development project and in proximity to key destinations (e.g., existing parks, schools, community centers, or shopping centers). Additionally, the locations for VMT-reducing projects would be limited to disturbed areas within existing roadway rights-of-way that do not support forest or agricultural uses. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in changes to the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Would the Program:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Encinitas is in the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB), which encompasses San Diego County and is under the jurisdiction of San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD). Regional and local air quality in the SDAB is affected by topography, dominant airflows, location, and season. The SDAB is bound by the Pacific Ocean to the west, and high mountain ranges to the east, which inhibit the dispersal of pollutants to the east. The region is characterized by warm dry summers and mild winters, and rainfall averages approximately 9 to 14 inches annually. During fall, the region often experiences dry, warm easterly winds, called the Santa Ana winds, which raise temperatures and lower humidity.

CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS

Concentrations of emissions from criteria air pollutants (i.e., the most prevalent air pollutants known to be harmful to human health) are used to indicate the quality of the ambient air. Criteria air pollutants include ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), respirable and fine particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), and lead. The sources of criteria air pollutants and their respective acute and chronic health impacts are described in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Sources and Health Effects of Criteria Air Pollutants

Pollutant	Sources	Acute[1] Health Effects	Chronic[2] Health Effects
Ozone	Secondary pollutant resulting from reaction of VOCs and NO_X in presence of sunlight. VOC emissions result from incomplete combustion and evaporation of chemical solvents and fuels; NO_X results from the combustion of fuels	Increased respiration and pulmonary resistance; cough, pain, shortness of breath, lung inflammation	Permeability of respiratory epithelia, possibility of permanent lung impairment
Carbon monoxide (CO)	Incomplete combustion of fuels; motor vehicle exhaust	Headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, death	Permanent heart and brain damage
Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)	Combustion devices (e.g., boilers, gas turbines) and mobile and stationary reciprocating internal combustion engines	Coughing, difficulty breathing, vomiting, headache, eye irritation, chemical pneumonitis or pulmonary edema; breathing abnormalities, cough, cyanosis, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, death	Chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function
Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)	Coal and oil combustion, steel mills, refineries, and pulp and paper mills	Irritation of upper respiratory tract, increased asthma symptoms	Insufficient evidence linking SO_2 exposure to chronic health impacts
Respirable particulate matter (PM_{10}), Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	Fugitive dust, soot, smoke, mobile and stationary sources, construction, fires and natural windblown dust, and formation in the atmosphere by condensation and/or transformation of SO_2 and ROG	Breathing and respiratory symptoms, aggravation of existing respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, premature death	Alterations to the immune system, carcinogenesis
Lead	Metal processing	Reproductive/developmental effects in fetuses and children	Numerous effects including neurological, endocrine, and cardiovascular effects

1. "Acute" refers to effects of short-term exposures to criteria air pollutants at fairly high concentrations.

2 "Chronic" refers to effects of long-term exposures to criteria air pollutants, usually at lower, ambient concentrations.

Notes: NO_X = oxides of nitrogen; VOC = volatile organic compounds.

Sources: EPA 2024.

TOXIC AIR CONTAMINANTS

Toxic air contaminants (TACs), also called hazardous air pollutants, are a defined set of airborne pollutants that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. A TAC is defined as an air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or that may pose a hazard to human health. For evaluation purposes, TACs are separated into carcinogens and non-carcinogens based on the nature of the physiological effects associated with exposure to the pollutant. Carcinogens are assumed to have no safe threshold below which health impacts would not occur.

According to the *California Almanac of Emissions and Air Quality* (CARB 2013), the majority of the estimated health risks from TACs can be attributed to relatively few compounds, the most important being diesel particulate matter (diesel PM). Diesel PM differs from other TACs in that it is not a single substance, but rather a complex mixture of hundreds of substances. Although diesel PM is emitted by diesel-fueled internal combustion engines, the composition of the emissions varies depending on engine type, operating conditions, fuel composition, lubricating oil, and whether an emissions control system is being used. In addition to diesel PM, the TACs for which data are available that pose the greatest existing ambient risk in California are benzene, 1,3-butadiene, acetaldehyde, carbon tetrachloride, hexavalent chromium, para-dichlorobenzene, formaldehyde, methylene chloride, and perchloroethylene.

ODORS

Odors are generally regarded as an annoyance rather than a health hazard. However, manifestations of a person's reaction to foul odors can range from psychological (e.g., irritation, anger, or anxiety) to physiological (e.g., circulatory and respiratory effects, nausea, vomiting, and headache). Traditional odor sources of concern include wastewater treatment plants, landfills and composting facilities, recycling facilities, petroleum refineries, chemical manufacturing plants, painting/coating operations, and food processing facilities.

SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Sensitive receptors are generally considered to include those land uses where exposure to pollutants could result in health-related risks to sensitive individuals, such as children or the elderly. Residential dwellings, schools, childcare facilities, hospitals, playgrounds, and similar facilities are of primary concern because of the presence of individuals particularly sensitive to pollutants and/or the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to pollutants.

FEDERAL AND STATE AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been charged with implementing national air quality programs. EPA's air quality mandates draw primarily from the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), which was enacted in 1970 and most recently amended by Congress in 1990. The CAA required EPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the following criteria air pollutants: ozone, CO, NO_2, SO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and lead. The CAA also requires each state to prepare a state implementation plan (SIP) for attaining and maintaining the NAAQS. The federal CAA Amendments of 1990 added requirements for states with nonattainment areas to revise their SIPs to incorporate additional control measures to reduce air pollution. Individual SIPs are modified periodically to reflect the latest emissions inventories, planning documents, and rules and regulations of the air basins as reported by their jurisdictional agencies.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the agency responsible for coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California and for implementing the California Clean Air Act (CCAA). The CCAA, which was adopted in 1988, required CARB to establish its own California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). CARB has established CAAQS for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, visibility-reducing particulate matter, and the above-mentioned criteria air pollutants. In most cases, the CAAQS are more stringent than the NAAQS.

The SDAB is currently designated as nonattainment for ozone with respect to the NAAQS and designated as nonattainment for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ with respect to the CAAQS (SDAPCD n.d.).

SAN DIEGO COUNTY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

SDAPCD is the agency responsible for regulating sources of air pollution within San Diego County and the SDAB to protect public health and welfare through the administration of federal and State air quality laws and policies. SDAPCD is responsible for monitoring air pollution, preparing the San Diego County portion of the SIP, and developing and implementing rules and regulations.

SDAPCD also develops air quality plans to identify the pollution control measures needed to expeditiously attain and maintain air quality standards. In response to the federal nonattainment designation for the 8-hour ozone standard, SDAPCD prepared the *2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Attainment Plan for San Diego County* and the *2008 Eight-Hour Ozone Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for San Diego County,* which identify control measures and rules implementing "reasonably available control technology" necessary to bring the SDAB into attainment (SDAPCD 2016a; SDAPCD 2016b). These documents were submitted to the EPA through CARB for approval as part of the San Diego County portion of the SIP for attaining and maintaining the 2008 eight-hour ozone standard. SDAPCD subsequently prepared the *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County* and the *2020 Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for the National Ambient Air Quality*

Standards for Ozone in San Diego County to demonstrate how the region will further reduce air pollutant emissions to attain the current NAAQS for ozone in the future (SDAPCD 2020a, SDAPCD 2020b). These documents were submitted to the EPA as a revision to the San Diego County portion of the SIP for attaining the 2008 and 2015 eight-hour ozone standards.

In compliance with the CCAA, SDAPCD has also developed the *2022 Revision of the Regional Air Quality Strategy* (RAQS) which outlines SDAPCD's plans and control measures designed to attain the CAAQS for ozone (SDAPCD 2023). The RAQS relies on information from CARB and SANDAG, including mobile and area source emissions, as well as information regarding projected growth in the County and the cities in the County, to forecast future emissions and then determine from that the strategies necessary for the reduction of emissions through regulatory control.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Neither the City of Encinitas nor SDAPCD have adopted CEQA thresholds of significance for assessing air quality impacts. However, the County of San Diego Planning & Development Services department has prepared the *Guidelines for Determining Significance, Air Quality*, which present screening level thresholds (SLTs) of significance for regional air pollutant emissions (County of San Diego 2007). The County air quality SLTs were developed based on SDAPCD stationary source trigger levels (Rule 20.2 and Rule 20.3) and are tied to achieving or maintaining attainment designations with the NAAQS and CAAQS. A project with emissions rates below these thresholds, shown in Table 3-2, is considered to have a less-than-significant impact on regional and local air quality and would avoid the impacts on human health identified in Table 3-1.

Table 3-2 County of San Diego Screening-Level Thresholds for Air Quality Impact Analysis

Pollutant	Total Emissions (lbs/day)
Respirable particulate matter (PM_{10})	100
Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	55
Oxides of nitrogen (NO_X)	250
Oxides of sulfur (SO_X)	250
Carbon monoxide (CO)	550
Lead and lead compounds	3.2
Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)	75

Notes: lbs/day = pounds per day

Source: County of San Diego 2007.

3.3.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less than significant. The emission inventories used to develop the applicable air quality attainment plans (i.e., *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County, 2020 Reasonably Available Control Technology Demonstration for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County, and 2022 Regional Air Quality Strategy for San Diego County*) are based primarily on projected population and employment growth and VMT for SDAB. These projections are based, in part, on the planned growth identified in regional and local plans. Therefore, projects that would result in increases in population or employment growth beyond that projected in regional or local plans could result in increases in VMT above those forecasted in the attainment plans, further resulting in mobile source emissions that could conflict with or obstruct implementation of air quality planning efforts for the SDAB. An increase in VMT beyond that projected in applicable air quality plans generally would be considered to have a significant adverse incremental effect on the SDAB's ability to attain or maintain State and federal ambient air quality standards. The analysis below focuses on whether the Program would increase population, employment, or VMT above planned levels.

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These improvements would not induce population growth directly or indirectly because they do not propose new housing and do not propose changes to policies or regulations related to land use or residential zoning. Rather, as shown in Table 2-1, VMT-reducing projects are anticipated to reduce vehicle trips. The VMT reductions would vary depending on the type and length of improvements. Therefore, implementation of the Program would not result in an increase in VMT relative to projections included in applicable air quality plans. Furthermore, VMT reductions would improve overall air quality in the SDAB by reducing mobile-source emissions of criteria air pollutants. The effects associated with the reduction of air pollutant emissions in the SDAB would be beneficial.

Construction associated with VMT-reducing projects could result in a temporary increase in the number of construction workers in the program area. These types of projects would be considered small construction projects, which would not require a large construction crew or generate substantial vehicle trips. Furthermore, construction workers would likely be sourced from the San Diego region. Permanent, substantial relocation of workers would not be required. Therefore, construction activities associated with VMT-reducing projects would not result in substantial population growth, employment growth, or VMT increases.

Based on the above discussion, VMT-reducing projects would not induce substantial population or employment growth, would not increase VMT, and would result in beneficial air quality effects; therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any applicable air quality plans. This impact is less than significant.

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?

Less than significant. The SDAB is designated as nonattainment for ozone with respect to the NAAQS and designated as nonattainment for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ with respect to the CAAQS. Impacts would be cumulative in nature if the Program, in combination with cumulative development, leads to violation of any air quality standard or contributes substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. In developing thresholds of significance for air pollutants, the County of San Diego and SDAPCD (through Rules 20.2 and 20.3) considered the emission levels for which a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. For the purposes of this analysis, the Program would result in a significant localized and/or regional air quality impact such that human health would be adversely affected if it would cause construction-generated or operational criteria air pollutant or precursor emissions to exceed the County's SLTs of 100 pounds per day (lbs/day) for PM_{10}, 55 lbs/day for $PM_{2.5}$, 250 lbs/day for NO_X and SO_X, 550 lbs/day for CO, and 75 lbs/day for volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

As discussed in Section 3.3.2(a), VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. VMT-reducing projects are anticipated to reduce vehicle trips. The VMT reductions would vary depending on the type and length of improvements. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would improve overall air quality in the SDAB by reducing mobile-source emissions of criteria air pollutants. The effects associated with the reduction of air pollutant emissions in the SDAB would be beneficial.

Construction of VMT-reducing projects would result in emissions of PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, NO_X, SO_X, CO, and VOCs from the use of construction equipment, construction worker vehicle trips, and truck hauling trips. Emissions of fugitive dust (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) are largely associated with ground-disturbing activities, such as site preparation. Construction of VMT-reducing projects could require a temporary increase in the number of construction workers, ground disturbance, and use of construction equipment. Construction-related emissions would be minor and temporary. Some air districts have established screening level sizes for the types of projects that would be expected to generate significant levels of criteria air pollutants during construction, such as a 254 dwelling unit single-family development, or a 452 thousand square-foot office park, which are much larger projects than would be implemented under the Program (BAAQMD 2023). Therefore, construction of VMT-reducing projects would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants.

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in the violation of any air quality standard or result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation. VMT-reducing projects would not result in emissions that would exceed the County's SLTs, and therefore, would not contribute to nonattainment designations and would not exacerbate or interfere with the region's ability to attain the health-based standards. This impact is less than significant.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than significant. The following sections describe the potential for the VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of Program to expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of CO and TACs.

Carbon Monoxide

The single largest source of CO is motor vehicle engines. CO concentration near roadways is a direct function of vehicle idling time and, thus, traffic flow conditions. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not result in any residential development that would directly cause regional population growth or otherwise induce population growth. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would not change existing land use designations in a manner that would increase traffic or have the potential to result in CO hotspots. Rather, the goal of VMT-reducing projects is to reduce vehicle trips, which would have the co-benefit of reducing vehicle idling time and air pollutant emissions. Although there would be a temporary increase in vehicle trips related to construction worker commute and equipment delivery, VMT-reducing projects would not result in substantial short- or long-term vehicle trip generation at levels that could cause unhealthy concentrations of CO on nearby roadways. Therefore, the Program would not create or contribute to a CO hotspot.

Toxic Air Contaminants

For projects that do not propose stationary sources of emissions, diesel PM is the primary TAC of concern. Diesel PM dissipates rapidly from the source, and exposure concentrations would decline with distance from construction activities (Zhu et al. 2002). The dose to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk (i.e., potential exposure to TAC emission levels that exceed applicable standards). Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance or substances in the environment and the duration of exposure to the substance. Dose is positively correlated with time, meaning that a longer exposure period would result in a higher exposure level for the maximally exposed individual. According to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, health risk assessments, which determine the exposure of sensitive receptors to TAC emissions, should be based on a 70- or 30-year exposure period. However, such assessments should be limited to the period and duration of activities that generate TAC emissions (OEHHA 2015).

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's existing pedestrian and bicycle network. These types of improvements would not introduce new stationary or mobile sources of diesel PM emissions. Rather, VMT-reducing projects are anticipated to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle idling time, which would have the co-benefit of reducing diesel PM emissions. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would result in beneficial long-term air quality impacts.

Construction of VMT-reducing projects would result in diesel PM emissions from the use of construction equipment and from the use of haul trucks to deliver materials. These types of construction activities would occur in residential and commercial areas, which include sensitive receptors such as residences, schools, and hospitals. However, these activities would involve minimal use of heavy-duty diesel equipment and thus, diesel PM emissions would be minimal as well. Furthermore, construction activities would be temporary and it is unlikely that construction involving use of heavy-duty diesel equipment or vehicles would last for longer than one to two weeks for the most-intensive VMT-reducing projects (e.g., installing new sidewalks and bicycle facilities), which is a short exposure period relative to the 30- or 70-year exposure timeframe recommended for health risk assessments. Construction activities would not be of the size, intensity, or duration to exceed County's SLTs or to emit substantial TAC concentrations. The County has adopted these thresholds in consideration of achieving attainment for the NAAQS and CAAQS, which represent concentration limits of criteria air pollutants needed to adequately protect human health. Because construction of

VMT-reducing projects would not exceed the County's SLTs and would not emit substantial TAC concentrations, these projects would not exacerbate or interfere with the region's ability to attain the health-based standards.

Summary

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in the violation of any air quality standard and would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations such that human health would be adversely affected. This impact is less than significant.

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These types of improvements would not introduce new permanent sources of emissions, such as those leading to odors (e.g., wastewater treatment plants, landfills and composting facilities, petroleum refineries, chemical manufacturing plants, painting/coating operations, and food processing facilities). However, the activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects, such as asphalt paving and use of diesel-powered construction vehicles and equipment, would result in temporary emissions, including odors. Although construction activities would generally occur in populated residential and commercial areas, emissions would be intermittent in nature, highly localized, and would disperse rapidly from the source. Additionally, emissions would be minimal, short-term, and would cease upon completion of construction. Therefore, construction-generated emissions, such as odors, would not adversely affect a substantial number of people. Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors, that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. This impact is less than significant.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources. Would the Program:				
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 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Encinitas is largely developed, with remaining native habitats concentrated in coastal bluffs, canyons, and undeveloped areas along the City's periphery. Land cover within Encinitas includes developed land, coastal sage scrub, southern maritime chaparral, grasslands, wetlands, and riparian habitats. Southern maritime chaparral is found on sandy soils influenced by coastal fog, while coastal sage scrub is more common on xeric slopes and clay-rich soils. Grassland habitats, both native and non-native, are scattered throughout the City. Riparian habitats, including forests, woodlands, and scrub, are found along drainage systems such as Escondido Creek and smaller creeks traversing the City. Wetland habitats are present in low-lying areas that receive periodic inundation, often dominated by hydrophytic plants.

Encinitas supports several large natural habitat areas, particularly along its southern and eastern edges. The City's habitats are known to support special-status species, including the coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and coastal cactus wren, as well as sensitive plants such as wart-stemmed ceanothus and Encinitas baccharis (City of Encinitas 2016).

Wildlife movement in Encinitas occurs primarily within riparian corridors and coastal habitat linkages. One key area for wildlife movement is the Escondido Creek corridor. Although much of the City's landscape is fragmented by roads and urban development, areas such as the Encinitas Ranch Preserve and conserved open spaces along Escondido Creek provide critical habitat connectivity.

The Multiple Habitat Conservation Program (MHCP), adopted by San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) in 2003, is a comprehensive, multiple jurisdictional sub-regional habitat planning program designed for northwestern San Diego County. The City of Encinitas is included in the MHCP study area for which SANDAG, in cooperation with the City, created a Draft Encinitas Subarea Plan. The subarea plans describe specific biological conservation policies each city agrees to institute to implement the MHCP (City of Encinitas 2001). The public review draft of the Encinitas Subarea Plan was released in 2001; however, the subarea plan was not adopted by the City. The Encinitas subarea encompasses 12,080 acres within the MHCP study area (City of Encinitas 2001).

3.4.2 Discussion

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 or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. The activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects would include minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. VMT-reducing projects are generally expected to be located in areas that lack suitable habitat for candidate, sensitive, or special-status species. Construction activities would be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks. Some VMT-reducing projects, such as those involving new sidewalk coverage, may occur along undeveloped roadway shoulders. Therefore, construction activities would be limited to small, disturbed areas that contain ruderal vegetation and are surrounded by urban development. Should any of the VMT-reducing projects involve habitat modifications that could adversely affect sensitive species, the impacts will be addressed in the project-specific CEQA document and mitigated accordingly. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in a substantial adverse effect on candidate, sensitive, or special-status species. No impact would occur.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.4.2(a), VMT-reducing projects are generally expected to be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders that are surrounded by urban development. These projects would be located in areas that lack riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities. Should any of the VMT-reducing projects involve habitat modifications that could adversely affect riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities, the impacts will be addressed in the project-specific CEQA document and mitigated accordingly. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities. No impact would occur.

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?

Less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.4.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would generally be expected to be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders that are surrounded by urban development. These projects would not be expected to be located in areas where protected wetlands are not present. Should any of the VMT-reducing projects involve habitat modifications that could adversely affect wetlands, the impacts will be addressed in the project-specific CEQA document and mitigated accordingly. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in a substantial adverse effect state or federally protected wetlands. No impact would occur.

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. As discussed in Section 3.4.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders that are surrounded by urban development. These projects would be located in areas where wildlife corridors and nursery sites are not present. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not interfere with wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. No impact would occur.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Less than significant. General Plan Policies 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, and 3.7 of the Resource Management Element directs the City to make every effort possible to preserve significant mature trees including for public right-of-way improvements and when development is proposed. Additionally, the EMC includes regulations governing the protection of biological resources, including mature and protected trees. Chapter 15.02 contains the City's Municipal Tree Ordinance which includes provisions for the protection and removal of public and heritage trees. Specifically, Section 15.02.030 outlines which trees are considered protected, including heritage trees and other significant trees based on size, species, or historical importance. Section 15.02.040 requires a permit for the removal of protected trees, and Section 15.02.050 outlines exemptions and conditions under which removal may be allowed, such as for safety or development purposes. Additionally, Section 15.02.110 emphasizes that every effort should be made to protect trees during construction by establishing protocols for construction activity, or the movement of equipment, within the dripline area of any City tree or heritage tree, including the establishment of a fenced tree protection area by the City Arborist.

As discussed in Section 3.4.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would generally be expected to be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders. Construction activities are not expected to occur in areas where protected biological resources are not present. However, it is possible that some VMT-reducing projects could require trimming, pruning, shaping, or removal of mature or protected trees. Should any of the VMT-reducing projects involve these activities, they would be addressed in the project-specific CEQA document and mitigated accordingly pursuant to the City's Municipal Tree Ordinance. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. No impact would occur.

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?

Less than significant. The Draft Encinitas Subarea Plan has not been adopted. However, the City complies with the conservation policies identified in the MHCP through use of the Draft Encinitas Subarea Plan as an implementation

tool by incorporating the Subarea Plan's conservation strategies into its broader land-use planning and permitting processes. As discussed in Section 3.4.2(a), VMT-reducing projects are generally expected to be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders. Construction activities would occur in areas that are not expected to contain natural habitat. Should any of the VMT-reducing projects involve habitat modifications, the impacts will be addressed in the project-specific CEQA document and mitigated accordingly. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not conflict with the provisions of SANDAG's MHCP. No impact would occur.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources.				
Would the Program:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

CEQA defines historic resources as those that are listed on, or determined to be eligible for listing on, the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) or a local register, or are otherwise determined to be historical pursuant to CEQA (PRC Section 21084.1) or the CEQA Guidelines (CCR Title 14, Section 15064.5). The CRHR also includes properties formally determined eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (PRC Section 5024.1). A historic resource may be an object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that is historically significant or significant in terms of California's architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural records (PRC Section 5020.1[j]). Typically, historic resources are more than 50 years old.

Archaeological resources may be considered historic resources or, if not, they may be determined to be "unique" as defined by CEQA (PRC Section 21083.2[g]). A "unique archaeological resource" is an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that, without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria: (1) contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information; (2) has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type; or (3) is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person. Archaeological resources are linked primarily to undeveloped sites with minimal prior excavation. These areas, identified as "high sensitivity" by the City General Plan, may contain unknown resources due to historical coastal settlement patterns. Developed or previously excavated areas have lower potential, as archaeological layers have likely been disturbed.

3.5.2 Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. Construction activities would occur within roadway rights-of-way and would not involve the demolition, destruction, alteration, or structural relocation of a historical resource. VMT-reducing projects may be located within the boundaries of a potential or formally designated historic district. However, these projects would be required to comply with applicable requirements in the City's *Engineering Design*

Manual, including standards for construction and maintenance of curbs, sidewalks, and pedestrian ramps (City of Encinitas 2009). Additionally, EMC 23.12.090 adopts the 2022 California Historical Building Code, Part 8, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations by reference. Therefore, compliance with the municipal code would protect historic resources from adverse change. Additionally, public right-of-way improvements (e.g., curb and gutter, sidewalks, street paving, curb cuts, driveways, and stamped sidewalk) would be subject to Planning Commission and/or City Council review prior to project approval. Compliance with local requirements would ensure that implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. This impact is less than significant.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. The activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects would include minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. However, VMT-reducing projects would be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders. Because ground disturbance would be limited to shallow depths, comprised of artificial fill or previously disturbed soils, archaeological resources are unlikely to be encountered. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would be consistent with General Plan Goal 7 and Policy 7.1 of the Resource Management Element, which call for the preservation of important cultural and scientific resources. Policy 7.1 requires that paleontological, historical, and archeological resources are documented, preserved, or salvaged if threatened by new development (City of Encinitas 2011). Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not adversely affect archaeological resources. This impact is less than significant.

c) Substantially disturb human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.5.2(b), the activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects would include minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. However, VMT-reducing projects would be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders. Because ground disturbance would be limited to previously disturbed soils, human remains are unlikely to be encountered.

In the unlikely event that human remains are encountered during construction activities, applicants would be required to comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, which states that if human remains are discovered during project construction, no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to the origin. Further, pursuant to California PRC Section 5097.98(b), remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and disposition of the remains has been made. If the County Coroner determines the remains to be of Native American origin, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) shall be contacted within 24 hours. Subsequently, the NAHC shall identify the most likely descendant (MLD). The MLD shall then make recommendations and engage in consultations concerning the treatment of the remains as provided in California PRC Section 5097.98. Because of the limited potential for human remains to be encountered during construction activities and required compliance with existing regulations pertaining to the discovery of human remains, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not substantially disturb human remains. This impact is less than significant.

3.6 ENERGY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Energy.				
Would the Program:				
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

ENERGY SOURCES

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is a regulated public utility that provides energy service to 3.7 million people within a 4,100-square-mile service area that encompasses San Diego and southern Orange counties (SDG&E 2024a). SDG&E is the primary electricity and natural gas supplier for the City. SDG&E obtains electricity from a variety of sources, including SDG&E-owned facilities and other private and publicly owned facilities that provide electricity through contracts and agreements. In 2020, SDG&E delivered approximately 40 percent renewable energy to its customers (SDG&E 2024b).

ENERGY REGULATIONS

Warren-Alquist Act

The 1975 Warren-Alquist Act established the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, now known as the California Energy Commission (CEC). The Warren-Alquist Act established State policy to reduce wasteful, uneconomical, and unnecessary uses of energy by employing a range of measures. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates privately-owned utilities in the energy, rail, telecommunications, and water fields.

State of California Energy Action Plan

The CEC, CPUC, and now defunct Consumer Power and Conservation Financing Authority prepared the first State of California Energy Action Plan (EAP) in 2003 to establish shared goals and specific actions to ensure that adequate, reliable, and reasonably-priced electrical power and natural gas supplies are achieved and provided through policies, strategies, and actions that are cost-effective and environmentally sound for California's consumers and taxpayers. The plan was updated in 2005 and 2008 to address policy, the emerging importance of climate change, transportation-related energy issues, and research and development activities (CEC and CPUC 2008).

Transportation-Related Regulations

Various regulatory and planning efforts are aimed at reducing dependency on fossil fuels, increasing the use of alternative fuels, and improving California's vehicle fleet. SB 375 aligns regional transportation planning efforts, regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets, and land use and housing allocation. CARB, in

consultation with the metropolitan planning organizations, provides each affected region with reduction targets for GHGs emitted by passenger cars and light trucks in their respective regions for 2020 and 2035.

As described in Section 2.2, Senate Bill 743 directed LCI (formerly known as the Governor's Office of Planning and Research) to adopt CEQA Guidelines addressing "criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects within transit priority areas. Those criteria shall promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses." SB 743 resulted in a fundamental shift to the manner in which transportation impacts are considered under CEQA, which has led to the need for the development and application of new VMT-based mitigation strategies and options.

Renewable Energy Regulations

SB X1-2 of 2011 requires all California utilities to generate 33 percent of their electricity from renewables by 2020. SB X1-2 also requires the renewable electricity standard to be met increasingly with renewable energy that is supplied to the California grid from sources within, or directly proximate to, California. SB X1-2 mandates that renewables from these sources make up at least 50 percent of the total renewable energy for the 2011-2013 compliance period, at least 65 percent for the 2014-2016 compliance period, and at least 75 percent for 2016 and beyond.

SB 100, signed in September 2018, requires that all California utilities, including independently owned utilities, energy service providers, and community choice aggregators, supply 44 percent of retail sales from renewable resources by December 31, 2024, 50 percent of all electricity sold by December 31, 2026, 52 percent by December 31, 2027, and 60 percent by December 31, 2030. The law also requires that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100 percent of retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers and 100 percent of electricity procured to serve all State agencies by December 31, 2045.

3.6.2 Discussion

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less than significant. Implementation of the Program would result in the construction of improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network within existing roadway rights-of-way. Certain VMT-reducing projects would result in the consumption of energy resources during operations, including energy used to power new pedestrian signals, rapid rectangular flashing beacons, pedestrian hybrid beacons, or other pedestrian activated crossing signals. However, energy consumption associated with operation of these features would be minor. Alternatively, these features could be powered by small on-site solar panels. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would benefit from various State laws and requirements related to increasing the use of renewable energy and using energy more efficiently, such as SB X1-2 and SB 100 requirements to increase the amount of electricity generated from renewable and carbon-free energy sources. Furthermore, these VMT-reducing projects are intended to reduce vehicle trips, with the co-benefit of reducing transportation-related energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects which have a beneficial impact on energy resources.

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would require the consumption of energy resources such as electricity, fuels, and non-renewable resources. However, these types of projects would not involve large amounts of labor or extensive use of construction equipment. Some worker trips and construction equipment may be required during installation of these improvements, resulting in the short-term consumption of diesel fuel and gasoline. Standard BMPs would discourage unnecessary idling and the operation of poorly maintained equipment during construction. Construction-related energy demand would vary throughout the construction period and would cease upon completion of construction.

Based on the above discussion, the Program would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during construction or operation of VMT-reducing projects. This impact is less than significant.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency

Less than significant. Relevant plans that pertain to the efficient use of energy include the EAP, which identifies transportation fuels supply, demand, and infrastructure as an area of focus (CEC and CPUC 2008). As discussed in Section 3.6.2(a), implementation of VMT-reducing projects would require the minor consumption of energy resources during construction and operation; however, these projects would reduce vehicle trips, with the co-benefit of reducing transportation-related energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would benefit from, and would not conflict with, various State laws and requirements related to increasing the use of renewable energy and using energy more efficiently, such as SB X1-2 and SB 100 requirements to increase the amount of electricity generated from renewable and carbon-free energy sources. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would directly support EAP goals and strategies and would not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. This impact is less than significant.

3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. Geology and Soils. Would the Program:				
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 California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

The City is within the Coastal Plain geomorphic region of the county. The Coastal Plain region is underlain by a sequence of marine and non-marine sedimentary rock units from the last 140 million years. Over this period of time the relationship of land and sea has fluctuated drastically, so that today ancient marine rocks are preserved up to elevations around 900 feet above sea level and ancient river deposits as high as 1,200 feet. The City is in an area that is exposed to risk from multiple earthquake fault zones. The Elsinore fault zone, the Rose Canyon fault zone, and

offshore faults have the potential to cause moderate to large earthquakes that would cause ground shaking in Encinitas, inclusive of the program area (City of Encinitas 2018).

EARTHQUAKE HAZARDS

The Program area is exposed to risk from multiple earthquake fault zones. The highest risks originate from the Elsinore fault zone, the Rose Canyon fault zone, and the offshore faults, each with the potential to cause moderate to large earthquakes that would cause ground shaking in Encinitas and nearby communities. Earthquake-triggered geologic effects also include surface fault rupture, landslides, liquefaction, subsidence, tsunamis, and seiches. Earthquakes can also lead to urban fires, dam failures, traffic accidents, and toxic chemical releases.

Liquefaction occurs primarily in saturated, loose, fine to medium-grained soils in areas where the groundwater table is generally 50 feet or less below the surface. When these sediments are shaken during an earthquake, a sudden increase in pore water pressure can cause the soils to lose strength and behave as a liquid. Areas of Encinitas susceptible to liquefaction and related ground failure (i.e., seismically induced settlement) include areas along the coastline that include Batiquitos and San Elijo lagoons (City of Encinitas 2018).

Slope failures, commonly referred to as landslides, include many phenomena that involve the downslope displacement and movement of material, triggered either by static (i.e., gravity) or dynamic (i.e., earthquake) forces. Slope failures often occur as elements of interrelated natural conditions that create hazards where an adverse site condition exists, and another event or series of events, like rain or irrigation, grading, changes to drainage patterns, trigger a subsequent event such as earth movement like mudflows, slumps, or landslides. The City's remaining natural hillsides and coastal bluff areas are generally vulnerable to various types of slope failures depending on location. Coastal areas in Leucadia, Old Encinitas, and Cardiff-by-the-Sea are subject to coastal processes, but the eastern sections of these communities and including New Encinitas and Olivenhain are underlain by weaker and adversely oriented geologic units that are more prone to slope movement like slumping and landsliding (City of Encinitas 2016).

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

Soils in the program area reflect the City's diverse topography, spanning coastal plains and foothills. Coastal areas are primarily underlain by sedimentary formations like sandstone, shale, and conglomerates, shaped by erosion from inland provinces. Lowland areas, lagoons, and canyon bottoms contain compressible soils, such as younger stream and tidal deposits, which are prone to settlement under added weight or vibration. These soils also present liquefaction risks during seismic events when saturated (City of Encinitas 2016). Most of the City is within a low liquefaction risk. Areas with high liquefaction risk are located along the coastline that includes Batiquitos and San Elijo lagoons (City of Encinitas 2018).

PALEONTOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY

Soils in Encinitas span several formations across different sedimentary and tectonic periods. These include Holocene-era paralic estuarine deposits, composed mainly of fine-grained sand and clay, and young alluvial floodplain deposits, characterized by poorly sorted, permeable materials. Older formations from the Pleistocene, such as the old paralic and very old paralic deposits, consist of poorly sorted, reddish-brown strandline, beach, estuarine, and colluvial sediments. Additionally, the Torrey Sandstone, dating from the middle Eocene, is a moderately indurated arkosic sandstone. The Del Mar and Santiago formations, also from the middle Eocene, consist of sandy claystone interbedded with sandstone and claystone, often containing fossiliferous materials and lagoonal claystone (City of Encinitas 2016). The Torrey Sandstone, which is part of the Eocene geological period, is considered to have high paleontological resource potential due to the discovery of significant fossils, including plant remains and marine invertebrates, in the region. The Del Mar Formation, also found in the area, has yielded important remains of terrestrial vertebrates and estuarine invertebrates, giving it a high paleontological resource sensitivity (City of San Diego 2007).

3.7.2 Discussion

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 California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)

No impact. There are no delineated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones within the program area. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not cause substantial adverse effects related to the rupture of a known earthquake fault. No impact would occur.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

No impact. The program area is in a region of high seismic potential due to several active faults in the greater region. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would be located within developed roadway rights-of-way where existing transportation infrastructure is present. These projects do not include construction of habitable structures and thus would not exacerbate hazards to people or property from strong seismic ground shaking. No impact would occur.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No impact. Liquefaction hazard areas in the Program area primarily occur along natural waterways. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would be located within developed roadway rights-of-way where existing transportation infrastructure is present. These projects do not include construction of habitable structures and thus would not exacerbate hazards to people or property from seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. No impact would occur.

iv) Landslides?

No impact. The Program area contains landslide hazard areas, which are located along the coastal bluffs and hillsides in eastern communities such as New Encinitas and Olivenhain. The VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would be located within developed roadway rights-of-way where existing transportation infrastructure is present. These projects do not include construction of habitable structures and thus would not exacerbate hazards to people or property from landslides. In addition, VMT-reducing projects would not occur on steep slopes or require substantial ground disturbing activities that could cause a landslide. No impact would occur.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less than significant. Some of the soils within the program area are prone to severe erodibility. Thus, projects that would involve ground disturbing activities have the potential to cause soil erosion and loss of topsoil. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would require minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. Ground disturbing activities would generally occur in already disturbed, developed roadway rights-of-way where existing transportation infrastructure is present. VMT-reducing projects would be required to comply with the City's *Engineering Design Manual*, which specifies grading and erosion control standards (City of Encinitas 2009). Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would be required to comply with the Encinitas *Jurisdictional Runoff Management Program* that complies with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ). Refer to Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality," for additional information. Through compliance with applicable requirements, VMT-reducing projects that would be

implemented as part of the Program would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. This impact is less than significant.

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?

Less than significant. Landslide hazards and liquefaction are discussed in Sections 3.7.2(a)(iii) and (iv). The Program area contains steep slopes and formations that are susceptible to landslides. Compressible and expansive soils throughout the City have potential to impact development (City of Encinitas 2018). However, VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program do not include construction of habitable structures that could be affected by lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse. This impact is less than significant.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

No impact. Expansive soils are known to occur within the Program area; however, VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program do not include construction of habitable structures that could be affected by expansive soils. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not create substantial risks to life or property from expansive soils. No impact would occur.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program do not include installation of any septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. No impact would occur.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less than significant. Areas underlain by geologic formations with severe or moderate paleontological sensitivity generally occur in the older sedimentary deposits found in portions of the coastal region, including Leucadia and Old Encinitas as well as areas east of Interstate 5, where older geological units like the Eocene Torrey Sandstone and Del Mar Formation are found. Thus, projects that involve ground disturbing activities have the potential to disturb unique paleontological resources. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would involve minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance during construction. Ground disturbance would generally be limited to shallow depths, comprised of artificial fill or previously disturbed soils, within developed roadway rights-of-way. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would be consistent with General Plan Policy 7.1 of the Resource Management Element, which requires that paleontological, historical, and archeological resources are documented, preserved, or salvaged if threatened by new development (City of Encinitas 2011). For all the foregoing reasons, the Program would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature. This impact is less than significant.

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions.				
Would the Program:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as GHGs, play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. GHGs are responsible for "trapping" solar radiation in the earth's atmosphere, a phenomenon known as the greenhouse effect. Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are believed responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and leading to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth's climate, known as global climate change or global warming. Emissions of GHGs contributing to global climate change are attributable, in large part, to human activities associated with on-road and off-road transportation, industrial/manufacturing, electricity generation by utilities and consumption by end users, residential and commercial on-site fuel usage, and agriculture and forestry. Emissions of CO_2 are largely byproducts of fossil fuel combustion.

The quantity of GHGs in the atmosphere that is responsible for climate change is not precisely known, but is enormous; no single project alone would measurably contribute to an incremental change in the global average temperature, or to global, local, or microclimates. From the standpoint of the CEQA, GHG impacts relative to global climate change are inherently cumulative.

Scientists have identified several ways in which global climate change could alter the physical environment in California, including:

- increased average temperatures;
- modifications to the timing, amount, and form (rain vs. snow) of precipitation;
- changes in the timing and amount of runoff;
- reduced water supply;
- deterioration of water quality; and
- elevated sea level.

CLIMATE CHANGE LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND PLANS

Statewide GHG Emission Targets and Climate Change Scoping Plan

Reducing GHG emissions in California has been the focus of the State government for approximately two decades. GHG emission targets established by the State legislature include reducing statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by

2020 (Assembly Bill [AB] 32 of 2006) and reducing them to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (Senate Bill [SB] 32 of 2016). Executive Order S-3-05 calls for statewide GHG emissions to be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. This target was superseded by AB 1279, which codifies a goal for carbon neutrality and reduce emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels by 2045. These targets are in line with the scientifically established levels needed in the U.S. to limit the rise in global temperature to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, the warming threshold at which major climate disruptions, such as super droughts and rising sea levels, are projected; these targets also pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius (United Nations 2015).

CARB adopted the Final 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan) on December 16, 2022, which traces the State's pathway to achieve its carbon neutrality and an 85 percent reduction in 1990 emissions goal by 2045 using a combined top-down, bottom-up approach under various scenarios. It identifies the reductions needed by each GHG emission sector (e.g., transportation [including off-road mobile source emissions], industry, electricity generation, agriculture, commercial and residential, pollutants with high global warming potential, and recycling and waste) to achieve these goals.

San Diego County Air Pollution Control District

SDAPCD administers EPA's Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V GHG Tailoring Rule through Rule 20.3(d)(3) and Regulation XIV (Title V Operating Permits), respectively. SDAPCD has not developed thresholds of significance or guidance for analysis of GHGs under CEQA.

Encinitas Climate Action Plan

The City CAP provides a roadmap for reducing GHG emissions through the implementation of various strategies, goals, actions and supporting measures. The CAP sets a target to reduce emissions by 44 percent below 2012 levels by 2030. The following seven strategies for reducing citywide GHG emissions are identified in the CAP: (1) building efficiency, (2) renewable energy, (3) water efficiency, (4) clean and efficient transportation, (5) reduce off-road equipment, (6) zero waste, and (7) carbon sequestration. Implementation of all local GHG reduction strategies is projected to result in a reduction of approximately 131,765 metric tons of CO_2e in 2030 (City of Encinitas 2020).

3.8.2 Discussion

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These VMT-reducing projects would not introduce new land uses or human activities that would result in substantial sources of GHG emissions. Rather, these projects are intended to reduce vehicle trips, with the co-benefit of reducing GHG emissions associated with on-road transportation. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would have a beneficial impact related to greenhouse gas emissions.

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would generate GHG emissions from the operation of construction equipment, construction worker vehicle trips, and truck hauling trips. However, these types of projects would not involve large amounts of labor or extensive use of construction equipment. Standard BMPs would discourage unnecessary idling and the operation of poorly maintained equipment during construction. Construction-related GHG emissions would vary throughout the construction period and would cease upon completion of construction. Any temporary GHG emissions would be offset by the overall net benefit of GHG emission reductions after implementation of the Program. Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment. This impact is less than significant.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less than significant. Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would have a significant impact if it would conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Applicable plans, policies, or regulations include Statewide GHG emission targets established by AB 32, SB 32, and EO S-3-05; the most recently adopted 2022 Scoping Plan; and the City's CAP (City of Encinitas 2020) and General Plan (City of Encinitas 2018).

As discussed in Section 3.8.2(a), VMT-reducing projects are intended to reduce vehicle trips, with the co-benefit of reducing GHG emissions associated with on-road transportation. Temporary, construction-related GHG emissions would be offset by the overall net benefit of GHG emission reductions after implementation of the Program. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would help the City meet Statewide GHG reduction targets established by AB 32, SB 32, and EO S-3-05; the most recently adopted 2022 Scoping Plan.

As stated in Section 2.5, "Program Objectives," one of the objectives of the Program is to reduce Citywide VMT to help meet GHG emission reduction targets identified in the City's CAP. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would support CAP Measure CET-1 to reduce vehicle trips and VMT through improving pedestrian and bicycle projects in the City Active Transportation Plan. VMT-reducing projects would also be consistent with policies in the Circulation Element of the City's General Plan that are intended to reduce automobile trips and associated GHG emissions. Applicable policies in the Circulation Element that would contribute to reductions in GHG emissions include policies that promote improvements to the pedestrian network (Policy 1.5, 3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5) and bicycle network (Policy 1.5, 3.4, 3.11, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). As described above, the GHG reductions that would be achieved from implementation of VMT-reducing projects would offset the temporary GHG emissions from construction of these projects.

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would support rather than conflict with applicable plans, policies and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. This impact is less than significant.

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials.				
Would the Program:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within 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 result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

This section describes the environmental setting and impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials. For the purposes of this analysis, the term "hazards" refers to risk associated with such issues as fires, explosions, exposure to hazardous materials, and interference with emergency response plans. The term "hazardous material" is defined in different ways for different regulatory programs. For this analysis, a "hazardous material" is defined by the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25501 as a material that "because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment."

"Hazardous waste" is a subset of hazardous materials. For this analysis, "hazardous waste" is defined in the California Health and Safety Code Section 25141(b) as waste that, "because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical, or infectious characteristics, [may either] cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness [or] pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of, or otherwise managed." California Government Code section 65962.5 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency to compile, maintain, and update specified lists of hazardous material release sites. The Program area contains sites listed on regulatory databases, including leaking underground storage tank cleanup sites and cleanup program sites listed on State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2024).

There are no public airports or private airstrips within the City. The nearest airport is the McClellan-Palomar Airport located approximately 2.6 miles north of the City.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) for the entire State. FHSZs are based on an evaluation of fuels, fire history, terrain, housing density, and the occurrence of severe fire weather and are intended to identify areas where urban fires could result in catastrophic losses. FHSZs are categorized as: Moderate, High, and Very High. According to the CAL FIRE FHSZ in State Responsibility Area data, several areas around the perimeter of the City are categorized as high and very high FHSZs. Additionally, portions of the City are identified as recommended local responsibility areas that are characterized as very high FHSZs (CAL FIRE 2024).

3.9.2 Discussion

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would involve the use of hazardous materials during construction and routine maintenance. However, these projects would be required to comply with relevant federal, State, and local regulations regarding the safe use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials as well as ensuring the reduction of the potential for humans or the environment to be affected by an accidental release of hazardous materials. Regulations that would be required of those transporting, using, or disposing of hazardous materials include the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act; CCR Titles 22 and 27; and the California Fire Code, adopted by reference in Chapter 10.04 of the EMC. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not create a significant hazard through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. This impact is less than significant.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.9.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would be required to comply with relevant federal, State, and local regulations that require strict adherence to guidelines regarding the safe use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials. Compliance with these regulations would reduce the potential for humans or the environment to be affected by an accidental release of hazardous materials. Enforcement of these regulatory standards would ensure that construction and routine maintenance of VMT-reducing projects would not create a significant hazard through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. This impact is less than significant.

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. As discussed in Section 3.9.2(a), VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would be required to comply with relevant federal, State, and local regulations that require strict adherence to guidelines regarding the safe use, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials. Compliance with these regulations would reduce the potential for humans or the environment to be affected by an accidental release of hazardous materials. Because such laws are established to be protective of human health and the environment, compliance with applicable regulations is sufficient to ensure that any hazardous materials used during construction or routine maintenance of VMT-reducing projects would not result in hazardous emissions within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. This impact is less than significant.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Less than significant. Sites with the potential to contain soil and groundwater contamination are located throughout the City. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program could potentially be located on a hazardous materials site. Ground disturbing activities, such as grading and excavation, on or near hazardous materials sites could result in the release of contaminants into the environment. However, compliance with General Plan policies would protect the public and the environment from the release of contaminants from hazardous materials sites. Specifically, General Plan Policy 3.1 of the Public Safety Element directs the City to enforce disclosure laws requiring all users, producers, and transporters of hazardous materials and waste to clearly identify such materials at the site and to notify the appropriate local county, state, or federal agencies in the event of a violation. For this reason, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. This impact is less than significant.

e) For a project located within 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 result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not result in new or relocated residential land uses, new types of noise-sensitive receptors, or new places of permanent employment where residents or workers could be exposed to a safety hazard or excessive noise. The nearest airport, McClellan-Palomar Airport, is approximately 2.6 miles north of the City. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not expose residents or workers to a safety hazard or excessive noise levels. No impact would occur.

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and could alter existing roadways that serve as emergency access routes, which would have the potential to impair adopted emergency response and evacuation plans. All improvements within roadway rights-of-way would be designed in compliance with the California Fire Code, Chapter 10.04 of the EMC. The California Fire Code requires the width of an unobstructed roadway to measure no less than 24 feet in order to provide adequate access for fire and emergency responders. Additionally, improvements within roadway rights-of-way would be required to comply with the City's *Engineering Design Manual*, which requires all project plans to be reviewed and approved by the fire department (City of Encinitas 2009). Therefore, compliance with applicable codes and design standards, as well as the review of project plans, would ensure that adequate access is provided for fire and emergency responders during operations of VMT-reducing projects.

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and may require temporary lane closures or result in other traffic disruptions. Encroachment permits from the City would be required for all work within public rights-of-way. As a requirement of encroachment permit approval, project proponents would be required to develop a traffic control plan and would be flagged and barricaded to the satisfaction of the City Inspector in compliance with the "Work Area Traffic Control Handbook," latest edition published by Building News, Inc. and the *Engineering Design Manual*. Compliance with the encroachment permit and traffic control plan would ensure that adequate access is provided for fire and emergency responders for the duration of construction activities. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. This impact is less than significant.

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would not include the construction of new housing or other structures and would not introduce new occupants that could be exposed to risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would be primarily within developed roadway rights-of-way where wildfire risk is low.

VMT-reducing projects could require the use of construction vehicles and equipment in areas categorized as very high FHSZs. The temporary and periodic use of construction vehicles and equipment within a very high FHSZ has the potential to increase the risk of an accidental fire ignition. However, construction activities associated with their implementation would occur within developed roadway rights-of-way where wildfire risk is low. In addition, enforcement of the California Fire Code would require the implementation of fire safety measures during construction. Safety measures would include prohibiting smoking except in approved areas and ensuring proper use of motorized equipment so that exhausts do not discharge against combustible material and refueling would not occur while equipment was in operation. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. This impact is less than significant.

3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. Hydrology and Water Quality.				
Would the Program:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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 on- or offsite erosion or siltation;	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
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	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Encinitas is located within the South Coast Groundwater Hydrologic Region which includes all of Orange County, most of San Diego and Los Angeles Counties, parts of Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties, and a small amount of Kern and Santa Barbara Counties. The South Coast Groundwater Hydrologic Region is divided into Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and San Diego subregions and overlies portions of the San Diego River Valley Groundwater Basin and smaller basins associated with coastal drainage (DWR 2024). There are numerous important surface hydrologic features within the City, including the coastal waters of the Pacific Ocean, San Elijo Lagoon, Batiquitos Lagoon, Cottonwood Creek, Encinitas Creek, and Escondido Creek. Two groundwater basins, Batiquitos Lagoon Valley and San Elijo Valley, occur within the City.

Encinitas is located within the Carlsbad Watershed Management Area which is comprised of six distinct hydrologic areas covering a land area of 211 square miles (Project Clean Water 2024). There are several surface hydrologic features within the Carlsbad Watershed Management Area including four unique coastal lagoons, three major creeks, and two large water storage reservoirs.

Flood zones, as defined by FEMA, are areas with varying flood risks depicted on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). While portions of Encinitas fall within the 100-year flood zone, no housing sites are included. A hydrologic study of Highway 101 identified flood problem areas from runoff during 10-year and 100-year storm events. Additionally, parts of the City lie in dam inundation areas, including low-lying regions near Cottonwood Creek, Encinitas Creek, Escondido Creek, and coastal zones, posing significant hazards during dam failures or major storms.

3.10.2 Discussion

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Less than significant. The Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan), adopted by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), establishes water quality objectives for ground and surface waters in the San Diego region. The purpose of the Basin Plan is to preserve and enhance water quality and protect the beneficial uses of regional waters. The RWQCB also issues waste discharge requirements to ensure that wastewater is not discharged in a manner that would cause an exceedance of applicable water quality objectives or adversely affect beneficial uses designated in the Basin Plan.

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These types of projects would not create substantial new sources of pollutants and would not involve the discharge of wastewater. The activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects would require minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. Ground-disturbing activities, could, depending on their location, cause soil erosion and contaminate nearby surface water. However, VMT-reducing projects would be required to comply with the City *Engineering Design Manual* (City of Encinitas 2009) and EMC Chapter 23.24, "Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control," which specify grading and erosion control standards. For VMT-reducing projects that involve one or more acres of ground disturbance, applicants would be required to submit a Notice of Intent to SWRCB to obtain approval to carry out construction activities under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (Order 2009-0009-DWQ). Compliance with the Construction General Permit requires the applicant to develop a project-specific storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), which would identify source control, site design, and treatment-control BMPs to reduce stormwater runoff volumes and pollutants leaving the site. Erosion and sediment controls identified in the SWPPP would substantially reduce the amount of soil disturbance, erosion, and sediment transport into receiving waters, and pollutants in site runoff during construction. Through compliance with all applicable regulations and permits, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements established by the San Diego RWQCB or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality. This impact is less than significant.

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects would not involve development of new land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and would not induce population growth in the area that would increase water demand. Pedestrian network improvements may include the installation of new landscaping, which would increase water demands compared to existing conditions. However, landscaping would be limited to water-efficient varieties, as required by EMC Chapter 23.26, "Water Efficient Landscape Regulations." Construction of VMT-reducing projects would involve ground disturbing activities, including grading and excavation, which could require the use of water for

dust abatement as needed. These activities would be temporary and intermittent and would not involve the substantial use of existing groundwater supplies. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies.

VMT-reducing projects would primarily occur in areas developed with impervious surfaces that do not provide for substantial groundwater recharge. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would result in little to no changes in existing impervious surfaces throughout the program area. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.

Based on the above discussion, the Program would not decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge. This impact is less than significant.

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 on- or offsite erosion or siltation;

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

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

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. VMT-reducing projects would not be located within existing watercourses. Rather, these projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way in areas that are primarily developed with existing transportation infrastructure (e.g., paved roadways, sidewalks, parking lots) and urban development (e.g., buildings, pavement, ornamental landscaping). Most VMT-reducing projects would involve improvements to the existing roadway network and would not result in a net increase in impervious surfaces. However, VMT-reducing projects that would involve the addition of new impervious surfaces, such as the addition of new sidewalks or bicycle facilities, would be required to comply with the drainage design requirements specified in the City *Engineering Design Manual* (City of Encinitas 2009). As applicable, drainage design would be subject to the requirements of the EMC Title 20 "Stormwater Management," EMC Chapter 23.40 "Floodplain Management Regulations," the City *Stormwater Standards Manual* (City of Encinitas 2019), the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps, and the City Engineer. Compliance with drainage design requirements would ensure that drainage patterns would not be substantially altered from the addition of new impervious surfaces.

The potential for erosion or siltation would be minimal because project sites would be developed with hardscape, landscaping, and appropriate drainage infrastructure. The relatively minor addition of impervious surfaces would not substantially increase surface runoff. The existing municipal storm drain system would have adequate capacity to accommodate these minor increases in surface runoff. Adequate drainage would reduce the potential for on- and off-site flooding. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects located within flood hazard areas would be subject to development permit requirements and EMC Chapter 23.40, Floodplain Management Regulations, which establishes standards for development in flood hazard areas. Construction activities would comply with grading and erosion control standards described in Section 3.10.2(a), including and EMC Chapter 23.24, "Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control," and the NPDES Construction General Permit. Compliance with applicable standards would reduce the potential for construction activities to result in substantial erosion and siltation, polluted surface runoff, and flooding.

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not substantially alter drainage patterns in a manner that would (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation, (ii) increase surface runoff and result in flooding, (iii) contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing stormwater systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff, or (iv) impede or redirect flood flows. This impact is less than significant.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No impact. Flood hazard areas within the City are located along Batiquitos and San Elijo Lagoons, canyons, and the coastal bluff area. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not result in the construction of new structures or the storage of materials and equipment on-site where they could be inundated by tsunami, floodwater, or seiche. Additionally, applicants would be required to obtain a development permit prior to construction of any VMT-reducing projects located within an area of special flood hazard. VMT-reducing projects would also be required to comply with EMC Chapter 23.40, "Floodplain Management Regulations," which establishes standards for development in flood hazard areas. In addition, as described in Section 3.10.2(a), VMT-reducing projects involving disturbance of one or more acres would be subject to the requirements of the NPDES Construction General Permit. Applicants would be required to develop a project-specific SWPPP, which would identify BMPs to reduce the potential for pollutants in surface runoff from leaving the project site. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation. No impact would occur.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less than significant. The potential for VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program to conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan is described in the following sections.

Water Quality Control Plan

As discussed in Section 3.10.2(a), the Basin Plan is the applicable water quality control plan for the San Diego region. VMT-reducing projects would be required to comply with the City's *Engineering Design Manual* and EMC Chapter 23.24, "Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control," which specify grading and erosion control standards to avoid or reduce excessive erosion what could impact water quality. In addition, construction projects that disturb one or more acres would be required to prepare a SWPPP that demonstrates conformance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. The SWPPP would identify applicable BMPs that would need to be implemented to reduce the amount of pollutants and surface runoff leaving the project site. Through compliance with all applicable regulations and permits, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the Basin Plan for the San Diego region.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan

Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, groundwater basins that are classified by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as medium- and high-priority basins are required to develop groundwater sustainability plans (GSP) and manage groundwater for long-term sustainability. The program area overlies portions of the Batiquitos Lagoon Valley and San Elijo Valley Groundwater Basins. A GSP has not been adopted for the Batiquitos Lagoon Valley or San Elijo Valley Groundwater Basins because these basins are classified by DWR as very low priority. Therefore, the City is not subject to the requirements of a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Regardless, as discussed in Section 3.10.2(b), VMT-reducing projects would not involve development of new land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and would not induce population growth in the area that would increase water demand. The minor water needs for dust abatement during construction and for landscaping would not require the substantial use of existing groundwater supplies.

Summary

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not conflict or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. This impact is less than significant.

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. Land Use and Planning.				
Would the Program:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

Existing land use designations in the Program area include residential, commercial and office, industrial, public and quasi-public, parks and open space, agriculture, vacant uses, and roads (City of Encinitas 2016). Based on an inventory conducted for the City's updated General Plan land use categories, single and multifamily residential uses represented the dominant land uses, occupying 5,926 acres and 44.5 percent of the General Plan area. Parks and recreation uses made up 2,945 acres or 22.1 percent of the General Plan area while commercial and office uses made up 417 acres or 3.1 percent of the General Plan area (City of Encinitas 2016). The inventory also included 240 acres of bays/lagoons, ponds, and water.

3.11.2 Discussion

a) Physically divide an established community?

Less than significant. Division of an established community could result from the construction of a physical feature, such as a wall, interstate highway, airport, roadway, or railroad tracks. Additionally, division of an established community could result from the removal of a means of access, such as a local road or bridge, that could impair mobility or constrain travel within an existing community or between a community and outlying areas.

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network within developed roadway rights-of-way. These projects would generally be located within a 0.5-mile travel distance of a proposed development project and in proximity to key destinations (e.g., existing parks, schools, community centers, or shopping centers). As such, these projects are intended to improve, rather than impair, community connectivity and access throughout the City. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not physically divide an established community. This impact is less than significant.

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. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network within developed roadway rights-of-way. These projects would not change existing land uses and would comply with all applicable zoning regulations. Furthermore, as discussed in Section 3.3, "Air Quality," Section 3.8, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions," and Section 3.17, "Transportation," VMT-reducing projects would be consistent with General Plan policies intended to reduce vehicle trips and associated air pollutant

and greenhouse gas emissions, which would have beneficial environmental effects. The Circulation Element aims to increase bicycle and pedestrian activity through policies that promote improvements to the pedestrian network (Policy 1.5, 3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5) and bicycle network (Policy 1.5, 3.4, 3.11, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). Thus, implementation of the Program would not only not conflict with these policies but be a benefit in encouraging and improving bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the City. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not 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 would occur.

3.12 MINERAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. Mineral Resources.				
Would the Program:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

The DOC Division of Mines and Geology classifies land into mineral resource zones (MRZs), according to the land's known or inferred mineral resource potential. The City of Encinitas is within the MRZ-3 Classification (City of Encinitas 2018). The MRZ-3 Classification is defined by "areas containing known mineral deposits that may qualify as mineral resources. Further exploration work within these areas could result in the reclassification of specific localities (DOC n.d.). Additionally, there are currently no permitted mines or active extraction sites within the City.

3.12.2 Discussion

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's existing pedestrian and bicycle network. The locations of VMT-reducing projects are identified in Table 2-1; however, applicants may propose VMT-reducing projects at other locations throughout Encinitas. Applicant-proposed locations for VMT-reducing projects would generally be within a 0.5-mile travel distance of a proposed development project and in proximity to key destinations (e.g., existing parks, schools, community centers, or shopping centers). Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would occur in already disturbed, developed areas within existing roadway rights-of-way where mineral resources are not present. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource of value to the region and the state. No impact would occur.

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. The City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance does not include any designations for mineral resources or extraction operations and does not identify any locally important mineral resource recovery sites. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. No impact would occur.

3.13 NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII.Noise.				
Would the Program result in:				
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, or a substantial temporary or permanent increase in noise levels above existing ambient levels that could result in an adverse effect on humans?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

Sound is a mechanical form of radiant energy, transmitted by a pressure wave through a solid, liquid, or gaseous medium. Sound that is loud, disagreeable, unexpected, or unwanted is generally defined as noise. Noise is typically expressed in decibels (dB), which is a common measurement of sound energy. Definitions of noise and vibration descriptors used in this section are provided in Table 3-3.

Noise can be generated by many sources, including mobile sources such as automobiles, trucks, and airplanes and stationary sources such as activity at construction sites, machinery, and commercial and industrial operations. As sound travels through the atmosphere from the source to the receiver, noise levels attenuate (i.e., decrease) depending on ground absorption characteristics, atmospheric conditions, and the presence of physical barriers.

In typical noisy environments, changes in noise of 1–2 dB are generally not perceptible. However, it is widely accepted that people can begin to detect sound level increases of 3 dB in typical noisy environments. Further, a 5dB increase is generally perceived as a distinctly noticeable increase, and a 10-dB increase is generally perceived as a doubling of loudness. Therefore, a doubling of sound energy (e.g., doubling the volume of traffic on a highway) that would result in a 3-dB increase in sound would generally be perceived as barely detectable (Caltrans 2013).

Noise Measurements conducted for the Housing Element Update EIR determined that daytime noise levels in the Program area range from 56.7 to 76.4 dBA L_{eq} and are typical of an urban environment (City of Encinitas 2016). Noise sources are attributed to vehicle traffic, helicopter overflight, train activity, and parking lot activities.

Table 3-3 Acoustic Term Definitions

Term	Definition
Noise	Noise is generally defined as sound that is loud, disagreeable, unexpected, or unwanted.
Decibel (dB)	Sound levels are measured using the decibel scale, developed to relate to the range of human hearing. A decibel is logarithmic; it does not follow normal algebraic methods and cannot be directly summed. For example, a 65-dB source of sound, such as a truck, when joined by another 65-dB source results in a sound amplitude of 68 dB, not 130 dB (i.e., doubling the source strength increases the sound pressure by 3 dB). A sound level increase of 10 dB corresponds to 10 times the acoustical energy, and an increase of 20 dB equates to a 100-fold increase in acoustical energy.
Equivalent Noise Level (L_{eq})	The average noise level during a specified time period; that is, the equivalent steady-state noise level in a stated period of time that would contain the same acoustic energy as the time-varying noise level during the same period (i.e., average noise level).
Maximum Noise Level (L_{max})	The highest instantaneous noise level during a specified time period.
Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)	Similar to the L_{dn} described above with an additional 5-dB penalty applied during the noise-sensitive hours from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., which are typically reserved for evening relaxation activities.
Vibration Decibels (VdB)	The vibration velocity level in the decibel scale.
Peak Particle Velocity (PPV)	The peak signal value of an oscillating vibration waveform. Usually expressed in inches/second (in/sec).

Sources: Caltrans 2013; FTA 2018.

GROUND VIBRATION

Vibration is the periodic oscillation of a medium or object with respect to a given reference point. Sources of vibration include natural phenomena (e.g., earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, sea waves, landslides) and those introduced by human activity (e.g., explosions, machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources may be continuous, such as factory machinery, or transient in nature, such as explosions.

Vibration amplitudes are commonly expressed in peak particle velocity (PPV) or root-mean-square (RMS) vibration velocity. PPV is typically used in the monitoring of transient and impact vibration and has been found to correlate well with the stresses experienced by buildings (FTA 2018; Caltrans 2020). PPV and RMS vibration velocity are normally described in inches per second. Although PPV is appropriate for evaluating the potential for building damage, it is not always suitable for evaluating human response. It takes some time for the human body to respond to vibration signals. In a sense, the human body responds to average vibration amplitude. The RMS of a signal is the average of the squared amplitude of the signal, typically calculated over a one-second period. As with airborne sound, the RMS velocity is often expressed in decibel notation as VdB, which serves to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration (FTA 2018).

The typical background vibration-velocity level in residential areas is approximately 50 VdB or lower and the threshold of perception for humans is approximately 65 VdB. For most people, a vibration-velocity level of 75 VdB is the approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible levels (FTA 2018: Caltrans 2020). Typical outdoor sources of perceptible ground vibration are construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads. If a roadway is smooth, the ground vibration is rarely perceptible. A vibration level of 85 VdB in a residence can result in strong annoyance and a vibration level of 100 VdB is the threshold for risk of minor cosmetic damage for fragile buildings. Constant or transient vibrations can weaken structures, crack facades, and disturb occupants (FTA 2018).

EXISTING SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Noise- and vibration-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses for which noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as uses for which quiet is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are of primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels, and because of the potential for nighttime noise to

result in sleep disruption. Additional land uses such as schools, transient lodging, historic sites, cemeteries, and places of worship are also considered sensitive to increases in exterior noise levels. Health care facilities, hotels, libraries, and other places where low interior noise levels are essential are also considered noise- and vibration-sensitive land uses.

EXISTING NOISE SOURCES

Major roadway sources of noise within the City are vehicular traffic along major roadways (i.e., Interstate-5, United States (US) Route 101, Leucadia Boulevard, Encinitas Boulevard) and rail traffic along the North County Transit District (NCTD) COASTER rail line. McClellan-Palomar Airport is approximately 2.6 miles north of the City. According to the Airport Master Plan, the airport noise contours do not extend into the City (County of San Diego 2021). Commercial and industrial land uses are present along major transportation corridors in the urban core of the City. Depending on the type of use, hours of operation, and specific equipment present, these areas could contribute to the surrounding noise environment. In addition, the City also experiences noises common in urban environments such as construction, landscaping equipment, and parks.

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Section 9.32 of the EMC provides noise standards relative to community noise level exposure, guidelines, and regulations. Table 3-4 provides the operational noise level limits established in EMC Section 30.40.010 at any point on or beyond the boundaries of the property from where the sound originates according to land use type and a permitted time of day. According to Section 9.32.410(A-B), except for emergency work, construction activities may not exceed 75 dB for more than 8 hours during any 24-hour period when measured at or within the property lines of any property which is developed and used either in part or in whole for residential purposes. In addition, operation of construction equipment is limited to Monday through Saturday between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Table 3-4 City of Encinitas Sound Level Limits

Adjacent Zone	Time	Applicable One-hour Average (L_{eq}) Sound Level (Decibels)
RR, RR-1, RR-2, R-3, R-5, R-8	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	50
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	45
R-11, RS-11, R-15, R-20, R-25, MHP	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	55
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	50
OP, LLC, LC, GC, L-VSC, VSC	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	60
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	55
L-I, BP	7 a.m. to 10 p.m.	60
	10 p.m. to 7 a.m.	55

Source: City of Encinitas 2024a.

3.13.2 Discussion

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, or a substantial temporary or permanent increase in noise levels above existing ambient levels that could result in an adverse effect on humans?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. During operation, these types of projects would not permanently introduce any new stationary sources of noise (e.g., machinery, pumps, fans, compressors, or other

equipment) and would not generate new vehicle trips that would result in transportation-related noise. Therefore, operation of VMT-reducing projects would not result in any increases in permanent noise sources.

The City has established requirements intended to protect the community from construction-related noise impacts. EMC Section 9.32.410(A-B) limits construction activities to Monday through Saturday between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Additionally, construction equipment may not exceed 75 dB for more than 8 hours during any 24-hour period when measured at or within the property lines of any property. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has also established construction noise criteria, which specify noise levels that may result in an adverse community reaction (FTA 2018). The FTA criteria are as follows:

- Residential: 90 dBA L_{eq} (day) and 80 dBA L_{eq} (night)
- Commercial/Industrial: 100 dBA L_{eq} (day and night)

Construction of VMT-reducing projects would result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels from vehicle trips that generate noise. For any given VMT-reducing project, construction-related vehicle trips would travel along multiple roads throughout the City, and therefore not expose any individual sensitive receptor to substantial noise levels for a sustained period of time. Additionally, the minor and temporary increase in construction-related vehicle trips would not result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels along roadways in the City because, as discussed in Section 3.13.1, "Environmental Setting," a doubling of traffic volume on a roadway would have to occur before an increase in noise levels would be detectable to a person.

The use of heavy equipment would also result in temporary increases in ambient noise levels during construction of VMT-reducing projects. As described in Section 2.4, "Description of the Proposed Program," construction equipment that could be used includes concrete saws for hardscape removal, backhoes or mini excavators, skip loaders, smooth drum rollers, dump trucks, and striping and paving machines, depending on the type of VMT-reducing project. Based on the anticipated construction equipment that would be used and applying reference maximum noise levels for each, average hourly construction noise could range from 76 dBA L_{eq} to 83 dBA L_{eq} at 50 feet from the receptor (FTA 2018).

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would be required to comply with the City's construction noise requirements outlined in EMC Section 9.32.410(A-B). Construction activities would be limited to daytime hours. Depending on the specific construction activities involved and the proximity of construction activities to existing sensitive receptors, construction noise levels may exceed the 8-hour average sound level limit of 75 dBA L_{eq}, as specified in in EMC Section 9.32.410(A-B). However, in these cases, applicants would be required to obtain a deviation in work days and hours from the Code Enforcement Manager. Regardless, construction noise levels are not anticipated to exceed FTA's construction noise criteria of 90 dBA L_{eq} in residential areas and 100 dBA L_{eq} in commercial and industrial areas. Therefore, construction activities would not result in an adverse community reaction.

With regard to human response, changes in noise of 1 to 2 dB are generally not perceptible to people in typical noisy environments. However, it is widely accepted that people can begin to detect sound level increases of 3 dB in typical noisy environments. Further, a 5-dB increase is generally perceived as a distinctly noticeable increase, and a 10-dB increase is generally perceived as a doubling of loudness (Caltrans 2013). However, a substantial increase in noise itself does not necessarily constitute a significant noise impact, so long as overall noise exposure is below an acceptable level and does not result in excessive exposure for extended periods of time (FTA 2018).

As discussed in Section 3.13.1, existing noise levels range from 56.7 to 76.4 dBA L_{eq} along the various roadways in the City. For construction activity along these roadways, construction noise would be masked by existing ambient noise levels. However, at other locations, such as in quieter, residential neighborhoods away from major roadways, existing ambient noise levels could be below 50 dBA L_{eq}, the most stringent daytime noise standard as identified in Table 3-4. In these areas, construction-related noise increases could exceed 10 dB, which would be perceived by people adjacent to the equipment as more than a doubling of existing noise levels. Actual increases in noise levels would vary depending on the distance from the construction equipment to the receptor and the presence of intervening topography, vegetation, or structures, which may provide shielding and reduce noise levels.

FTA provides general and detailed guidance for assessing construction noise impacts and this analysis is developed largely based on the general guidance. In addition, FTA recognizes the greater potential for noise impacts to occur when construction activities result in noise exposure for extended periods of time, which FTA has identified as 30 days, and in these circumstances, recommends the use of lower noise standards that account for the sensitive time of the day. Because the proposed project's construction would occur during the daytime hours and each individual phase would be relatively short (i.e., one to two days at any one location), it is appropriate to only consider the hourly noise levels at each construction location, assessing construction noise as a temporary and intermittent source rather than a source that occurs for an extended period of time.

On average, construction activities for each VMT-reducing project would be short-term, lasting for approximately one to two weeks. Construction activities would not involve particularly noisy equipment or activities, such as blasting or pile driving. Different pieces of construction equipment would be used intermittently to complete the work and would move linearly along a roadway or corridor and through a given area at an approximate rate of 250 to 350 feet per day. Because the sources of construction noise would be mobile and shifting as the work is performed, the exposure of individual residents, households, and other sensitive receptors to substantial noise level increases would be limited to a fraction of a workday. Furthermore, construction-related noise-generating activities would be limited to daytime hours when ambient noise levels are higher and people are less likely to be disturbed or awakened. Such brief, intermittent periods of exposure to substantial noise level increases would not result in the kinds of adverse health effects to humans that are associated with prolonged exposure to sustained substantial noise levels over long periods of time (e.g., weeks or months) or to substantial noise level increases that disrupt sleep. Thus, for all the foregoing reasons, construction activities would not result in substantial temporary increases in noise levels that would adversely affect human health or well-being in the City.

Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not generate substantial temporary or permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of a given project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies, or a substantial temporary or permanent increase in noise levels above existing ambient levels that could result in an adverse effect on humans. This impact is less than significant.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. Operation of these projects would not introduce stationary or transportation-related sources of groundborne vibration or noise. Therefore, operation of VMT-reducing projects would not generate excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels.

Based on FTA guidance, transient vibrations (such as construction activity) with a 0.2 inches per second (in/sec) PPV may be characterized as causing structural damage to non-engineered timber and masonry buildings, 0.3 PPV in/sec for engineered concrete masonry, and 0.5 PPV in/sec for reinforced concrete, steel, or timber structures. In addition, peak VdB established by the FTA, recommend a level of 80 VdB for the purpose of evaluating disturbance to sensitive land uses where people sleep.

Construction of VMT-reducing projects would result in temporary increases in groundborne noise and vibration from the use of heavy equipment. As described in Section 2.4, "Description of the Proposed Program," construction equipment that could be used includes concrete saws for hardscape removal, backhoes or mini excavators, skip loaders, smooth drum rollers, dump trucks, and striping and paving machines, depending on the type of VMT-reducing project. Construction activities would not require the use of pile drivers or other types of equipment that produce substantial groundborne vibration or noise. Of the types of equipment that would be used, vibratory rollers would generate the highest levels of vibration. Based on FTA guidance, reference vibration levels for this type of equipment are 0.21 PPV in/sec and 94 VdB at 25 feet (FTA 2018). FTA recommended criteria of 0.2 PPV in/sec for structural damage and 80 VdB for human disturbance could be exceeded for VMT-reducing projects at distances within 75 feet and 25 feet, respectively, of construction equipment use. Actual exposure levels would depend on equipment types, haul truck routes, and proximity to and characteristics of sensitive receptors.

As discussed in Section 3.13.2(a), construction activities for each VMT-reducing project would be short-term, lasting, on average, approximately one to two weeks. Different pieces of construction equipment would be used intermittently to complete the work and would move linearly along a roadway or corridor and through a given area at an approximate rate of 250 to 350 feet per day. Because the sources of groundborne vibration and noise would be mobile and shifting as the work is performed, the exposure of individual residents, households, and other sensitive receptors to excessive groundborne vibration and noise would be limited to a fraction of a workday. Furthermore, construction activities that generate groundborne vibration and noise would be limited to daytime hours when people are less likely to be disturbed or awakened. Such brief, intermittent periods of exposure to increases in groundborne vibration and noise would not result in the kinds of adverse health effects to humans that are associated with prolonged exposure to sustained substantial groundborne vibration and noise levels over long periods of time (e.g., weeks or months) or to substantial noise level increases that disrupt sleep. Furthermore, most construction activities would be located at distances greater than 25 feet from the nearest structures and vibration levels would dissipate rapidly at increasing distance from the vibration source. Finally, it is extremely rare for structural damage to occur from equipment other than pile driving, at these distances, thus, the potential for structural damage from the proposed construction activities would not be a concern. For all the foregoing reasons, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. This impact is less than significant.

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. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not be located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan. In addition, these projects do not propose the siting of any new sensitive receptors near existing airstrips or airports. Therefore, implementation of the Program would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive airport-related noise levels. No impact would occur.

3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. Population and Housing. Would the Program:				
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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

By 2035, the buildout date for the City's General Plan, SANDAG forecasts that the population in the City will increase to 74,268 people, which represents a 17.2 percent growth rate when compared to 2015 conditions. In comparison, the San Diego region is anticipated to grow by 19.8 percent from 2015 to 2035 (City of Encinitas 2016).

Based on data from the US Census Bureau, the City's population in 2023 was estimated to be 60,841 people (US Census Bureau 2024). In 2022, there were 23,837 households in the city with an average household size of approximately 2.58 people (US Census Bureau 2024).

3.14.2 Discussion

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)?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would not induce population growth directly or indirectly because the projects do not propose new housing or changes to policies or regulations related to land use or residential zoning. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would generally be located in urbanized areas that are within 0.5-mile travel distance of a proposed development project and in proximity to key destinations (e.g., existing parks, schools, community centers, or shopping centers). Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not induce population growth through the extension of transportation infrastructure to undeveloped areas. Furthermore, improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle network would support the growth and development that is anticipated to occur under the land use assumptions contained within the City's General Plan. Construction of VMT-reducing projects could result in a temporary increase in the number of construction workers in the program area. However, these types of projects are small construction projects, which would not require a large construction crew. Furthermore, construction workers would likely be from the San Diego region and permanent, substantial relocation of workers would not be required. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in substantial population growth or employment growth in the program area. This impact is less than significant.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would occur within developed roadway rights-of-way. These projects would not displace people or housing because they would not require the removal of existing housing and would not propose changes to policies or regulations related to land use or residential zoning. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. No impact would occur.

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. Public Services.				
Would the Program:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the 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 public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.15.1 Environmental Setting

The Encinitas Fire Department and the San Diego County Sheriff Department (contracted by the City) are the primary agencies responsible for providing fire protection and police protection services in the program area. Encinitas firefighters are trained to respond to fires (both structural and wildland), medical aid, hazardous materials incidents, confined space and trench rescues, weapons of mass destruction incidents, swift water rescues, and other emergencies. The Encinitas Fire Department has six fire stations located in different areas of the City to provide "round-the-clock" coverage to the community. These stations house the Encinitas Fire Department's 51 fire suppression personnel, fire engines, and various other emergency apparatus needed for specialized responses (City of Encinitas 2024b).

The North Coastal Sheriff Station is located in Encinitas at 175 North El Camino Real, and the station provides services for the Cities of Encinitas, Solana Beach, Del Mar, and the unincorporated area of Rancho Santa Fe. In addition to patrol and traffic enforcement, the station has a Community Oriented Policing and Problem Solving team and a Crime Suppression Team, both of which work on specific community needs. As a contract City, Encinitas has access to the Sheriff's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, Aerial Support to Regional Enforcement Agencies (ASTREA) helicopters, and other County Sheriff resources (City of Encinitas 2024c).

K-12 public education is provided by Encinitas Union School District, San Dieguito Union High School District, Cardiff School District, and Solana Beach School District. In addition to public schools, the City contains private school facilities. Although there are currently no charter schools directly located within Encinitas City limits, Encinitas families can access them in neighboring communities.

The City operates a number of other facilities, which include various government buildings, a library, and parks and recreational facilities. The Encinitas Library is located at 540 Cornish Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024, and the Cardiff-by-the-Sea library is located at 2081 Newcastle Avenue, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, CA 92007.

3.15.2 Discussion

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the 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 public services:

Fire protection?

Police protection?

Schools?

Parks?

Other public facilities?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's existing pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects do not include the development of new residences or the creation of permanent jobs requiring increased fire or police services. As discussed in Section 3.14, "Population and Housing," VMT-reducing projects would not induce population growth that would generate new students in the community or new residents that would require school services, new or expanded park facilities, other public facilities. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities. No impact would occur.

3.16 RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. Recreation.				
Would the Program:				
a) 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) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.16.1 Environmental Setting

The City's park system is composed of a variety of recreation amenities that provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation including parks, beaches, open spaces, playgrounds, sports fields, a dog park, and community amenities such as the Encinitas Ranch Golf Course and the Encinitas Community and Senior Center. Additionally, as of 2016, Encinitas had approximately 40.5 miles of multi-use hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. The City of Encinitas Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of two operating divisions: Parks and Beaches and Recreation.

The City's General Plan establishes the acceptable service standard ratio for parks. General Plan Policy RE-1.5 requires a minimum of 15 acres of recreation land for each 1,000 population for the entire community (City of Encinitas 2016).

3.16.2 Discussion

a) 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. Population growth in an area can result in an increase in the demand for parks and recreational facilities. VMT-reducing projects would include improvements to the City's existing pedestrian and bicycle network. These types of improvements would not include construction of new housing or commercial development, and therefore, would not contribute to population growth. In addition, the number of construction workers needed to install future projects would be minimal and would not substantially increase the use of existing recreational facilities. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not increase the use of recreational facilities to the extent that substantial deterioration would occur. No impact would occur.

b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No impact. As discussed in Section 3.16.2(a), VMT-reducing projects would not include development of recreational facilities and would not induce population growth that would require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. No impact would occur.

3.17 TRANSPORTATION

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

3.17.1 Environmental Setting

The transportation system in the City consists of highways, streets, pedestrian pathways, transit routes, and bikeways. The circulation system is connected to the larger regional network, which includes Interstate 5 and US-101. NCTD provides bus and rail services in the program area. Encinitas Station is the major transit stop located within the program area and is served by the NCTD COASTER and BREEZE Bus Routes 101, 304, and 309. Several major roadways within the program area are equipped with bike lanes, including Leucadia Boulevard, Encinitas Boulevard, and Santa Fe Drive (SANDAG 2024). In addition to street bicycle facilities, Encinitas has several off-street trail systems including the Encinitas Ranch Trail System, the Manchester Preserve trails, and Olivenhain Trail System (City of Encinitas 2024d).

3.17.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Less than significant. Applicable programs, plans, and policies that address the circulation system within the program area include the following:

- The SANDAG 2021 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) serves as the blueprint for developing a regional transportation system that further enhances quality of life, promotes sustainability, and offers more mobility options for people and goods in the San Diego region. The RTP includes strategies and programs to reduce VMT in the region, including actions to promote active transportation and improve transit infrastructure (SANDAG 2021). The next update to the RTP is scheduled for adoption in 2025.
- The Circulation Element of the City's General Plan includes policies that address the transportation system, including policies to promote increased walking and biking through the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (City of Encinitas 2018).
- The City's CAP includes a variety of measures to reduce GHG emissions through promoting and improving alternate modes of transportation. GHG reduction measures include synchronizing traffic signals and installing

roundabouts to reduce vehicle idling, implementing a local shuttle system, and constructing bicycle and pedestrian projects identified in the City Active Transportation Plan.

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would improve the operation of the circulation system by encouraging walking, bicycling, and taking public transit and thereby reducing vehicle trips on roadways in the program area. Therefore, these projects would support rather than conflict with the programs and policies in the SANDAG 2050 RTP as well as the City's General Plan and CAP that are intended to reduce VMT. Construction of VMT-reducing projects would result in a temporary increase in construction-related vehicle trips and worker commutes. However, these types of projects would be considered small construction projects, which would not require a large construction crew and would not result in a substantial number of vehicle trips. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not adversely affect the performance of the circulation system and would not conflict with any applicable transportation programs, plans, or polices. This impact is less than significant.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b), which pertains to vehicle miles travelled?

Less than significant. As described in Section 2.2, Senate Bill 743 required LCI (formerly known as the Governor's Office of Planning and Research) to develop new CEQA guidelines that address transportation metrics under CEQA. The Office of Administrative Law approved comprehensive updates to the CEQA Guidelines (including Section 15064.3[b]) that included removing level of service as a measure of transportation impacts under CEQA and replacing it with VMT. A "vehicle mile traveled" is defined as one vehicle traveling on a roadway for one mile. According to LCI's *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA*, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 vehicle trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact (OPR 2018).

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These improvements would not induce population growth directly or indirectly because they do not propose new housing and do not propose changes to policies or regulations related to land use or residential zoning. Rather, as shown in Table 2-1, VMT-reducing projects are anticipated to reduce vehicle trips. The VMT reductions would vary depending on the type and length of improvements. Construction of VMT-reducing projects would not require large construction crews, and thus, would not result in a number of vehicle trips that would exceed 110 vehicle trips per day. Thus, any temporary VMT increases associated with construction activities would be offset by the overall net benefits of long-term VMT reduction from implementation of the Program. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3(b). This impact is less than significant.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's existing pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way. Improvements within roadway rights-of-way would be required to comply with the City *Engineering Design Manual* and be consistent with the City *Active Transportation Plan* (City of Encinitas 2009; City of Encinitas 2018). Compliance with applicable design standards would ensure that traffic safety hazards are minimized. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects are intended to improve the safety of the existing transportation network, such as through upgrading bicycle facilities; extending sidewalks; and installing high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian hybrid beacons, pedestrian signals, mid-block crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, speed tables, bulb-outs (i.e., curb extensions), curb ramps, and pedestrian-only connections and districts.

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and have potential to increase hazards for bicyclists and pedestrians using the existing transportation network. Encroachment permits from the City would be required for all work within public rights-of-way. As a requirement of encroachment permit approval, project proponents would be required to develop a traffic control plan and would be flagged and

barricaded to the satisfaction of the City Inspector in compliance with the "Work Area Traffic Control Handbook," latest edition published by Building News, Inc. and the *Engineering Design Manual*. Section 15.04.130 of the EMC establishes regulations related to traffic control around work sites. Compliance with the encroachment permit and traffic control plan would ensure that traffic safety hazards within public rights-of-way are minimized for the duration of construction activities. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. This impact is less than significant.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and have potential to alter existing roadways that serve as emergency access routes. All improvements within roadway rights-of-way would be designed in compliance with the most recent California Fire Code at the time of project implementation. The California Fire Code, which is adopted by reference in Chapter 10.04 of the EMC, requires the width of an unobstructed roadway to measure no less than 24 feet in order to provide adequate access for fire and emergency responders. Additionally, improvements within roadway rights-of-way would be required to comply with the City *Engineering Design Manual*, which requires maintained emergency access during construction and that all project plans are reviewed and approved by the fire department (City of Encinitas 2009). Compliance with applicable codes and design standards would ensure that adequate emergency access is provided in the design of VMT-reducing projects.

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and may require temporary lane closures or result in other traffic disruptions. Encroachment permits from the City would be required for all work within public rights-of-way. As a requirement of encroachment permit approval, project proponents would be required to develop a traffic control in compliance with the "Work Area Traffic Control Handbook," latest edition published by Building News, Inc. Compliance with the encroachment permit and traffic control plan would ensure that traffic disruptions are minimized and adequate emergency access is provided for the duration of construction activities. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in inadequate emergency access. This impact is less than significant.

3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.				
Would the Program 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) 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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.18.1 Environmental Setting

AB 52, signed into law in September of 2014, established a new class of resources under CEQA: "tribal cultural resources," defined in PRC 21074. Pursuant to PRC Sections 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, and 21082.3, where one or more California Native American Tribes has requested formal written notification of proposed projects from a lead agency, the lead agency shall begin consultation with those tribes by providing them with formal written notification of proposed projects prior to the release of an environmental impact report, negative declaration, or mitigated negative declaration.

In compliance with PRC section 21080.3.1, the City provided formal written notification of the Program on December 19, 2024. As of the publication of this IS/proposed ND, no tribes have requested consultation. The Pala Band of Mission Indians determined that the Program is not within the boundaries of the recognized Pala Indian Reservation and is also beyond the boundaries of the territory that the tribe considers its Traditional Use Area (TUA) and therefore declined consultation. The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians (Viejas) noted that the project area may contain many sacred sites to the Kumeyaay people and requested that sacred sites be avoided with adequate buffer zones. However, no specific information was provided regarding the location or nature of potential sacred sites. Additionally, Viejas requested that all National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), CEQA, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and California NAGPRA laws be followed; and that Viejas be contacted immediately in the case of any changes or inadvertent discoveries.

3.18.2 Discussion

Would the program 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) 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)?

and

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?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. The activities involved in constructing VMT-reducing projects would include minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. However, VMT-reducing projects would be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders. Because ground disturbance would be limited to shallow depths, comprised of artificial fill or previously disturbed soils, tribal cultural resources are unlikely to be encountered. Nevertheless, known sacred sites will be avoided, Viejas will be contacted should any inadvertent discoveries occur during construction, and the City would comply with all environmental laws and repatriation, as applicable. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not adversely affect tribal cultural resources. This impact is less than significant.

3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIX. Utilities and Service Systems.				
Would the Program:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have insufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Fail to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.19.1 Environmental Setting

Through close coordination with the San Deigo County Water Authority, the San Dieguito Water District (SDWD) and the Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD) are the two primary agencies that supply water to the City. The City contracts with EDCO Waste & Recycling Services for solid waste disposal, recycling, and green waste collection. Additionally, the City is served by three sewer districts: Cardiff Sanitation District (CSD), Encinitas Sanitary Division (ESD), and Leucadia Wastewater District (LWD).

The City has an extensive storm drainage system that consists of 65 miles of underground storm drain pipe, 1,789 storm drain boxes, and over 90 miles of channels (City of Encinitas 2016). The primary purpose of the public storm drain conveyance system is to facilitate the conveyance of drainage water from rainfall events away from urban areas. The City's Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining the storm drain infrastructure.

SDG&E, a regulated public utility, supplies electricity and natural gas to the city. SDG&E procures electricity generated from a variety of energy sources including coal, natural gas, nuclear, hydroelectric, and a mix of renewable resources.

3.19.2 Discussion

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No impact. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would not involve development of new land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and would not induce population growth in the area that would require the construction of new or expanded utilities. Although construction activities for VMT-reducing projects may require minor ground disturbance, excavation would be limited to shallow depths and would not require the relocation of underground utility lines, such as water or sewer lines. Some VMT-reducing projects, such as those involving the construction of new sidewalks or bicycle facilities, could require the relocation of existing above-ground utilities (e.g., powerlines or utility boxes) or stormwater infrastructure (e.g., curb, gutter, and drains) within roadway rights-of-way. However, the environmental effects of these utility relocations would be minor and consistent with the effects described throughout this IS/proposed ND. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in significant environmental effects from the relocation or construction of water infrastructure, wastewater treatment facilities, storm drainage facilities, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. No impact would occur.

b) Have insufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would not involve development of new land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and would not induce population growth in the area that would increase demand for water supplies. Pedestrian network improvements may include the installation of new landscaping, which would increase water demands compared to existing conditions. However, the City has landscaping regulations that promote sustainable practices for new developments, emphasizing the use of native and drought-tolerant plants to conserve water and support local biodiversity. Water Efficient Landscape Regulations are provided in EMC Chapter 23.26. Therefore, VMT-reducing projects would not result in a substantial permanent increase in water demand. Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects may require small amounts of water for dust control and grading, which would be sourced from existing water supplies. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in a physical impact associated with provision of sufficient water supplies, including related infrastructure needs. This impact is less than significant.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would not involve development of new land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and would not induce population growth in the area that would increase demand for wastewater treatment. Further, VMT-reducing projects would not involve the construction of new restroom facilities. Depending on the duration and location of VMT-reducing projects, the applicant may supply portable restrooms for use by work crews. Portable restrooms are self-contained and would be cleaned periodically, and the waste would be hauled off-site to a wastewater treatment facility for disposal. This service is typically provided by an independent contractor permitted to handle, haul, and dispose of sanitary sewage. Pursuant to 40 CFR Part 403.5, hauled waste must be disposed of at a designated publicly owned treatment facility. Typically, publicly owned treatment facilities are responsible for implementing permit programs for hauled waste and ensure

that adequate treatment capacity exists. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not exceed the capacity of any wastewater treatment provider. This impact is less than significant.

a) 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?

and

Fail to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less than significant. EMC Chapter 11.22 addresses construction and demolition (C&D) debris recycling, aiming to reduce waste sent to landfills by setting guidelines for recycling materials from construction projects. The ordinance aligns with California regulations, including California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen) requirements and SB 1383, mandating that C&D waste materials be recycled to support sustainability goals. Updated in 2021, this Chapter includes provisions for waste diversion tracking and compliance, ensuring that projects within the City follow statewide standards for environmental responsibility and resource conservation. As part of this compliance, the City requires a Waste Management Plan for certain construction projects to demonstrate how the project will sort, recycle, and properly dispose of materials to achieve the specified waste diversion goals.

VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would not involve development of new land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and would not induce population growth in the area that would increase long-term demand for solid waste disposal services. Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would not involve new building construction, but may require the removal of existing pavement, soils, and other debris. These types of projects would temporarily generate small amounts of solid waste that would be accommodated by nearby landfills. If determined to be applicable, project proponents would develop a construction waste management plan to reduce solid waste generation and comply with the waste diversion requirements of SB 1374 and CalGreen. Based on the above discussion, VMT-reducing projects would not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards or in excess of the capacity of existing landfills. This impact is less than significant.

3.20 WILDFIRE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. Wildfire.				
Is the project located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as high fire hazard severity zones?				
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:		☒ Yes		☐ No
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require the installation 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.20.1 Environmental Setting

CAL FIRE has mapped FHSZs for the entire state. FHSZs are based on an evaluation of fuels, fire history, terrain, housing density, and the occurrence of severe fire weather and are intended to identify areas where urban fires could result in catastrophic losses. FHSZs are categorized as moderate, high, and very high. According to CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer, several areas within and around the perimeter of the City are categorized as very high FHSZs in both state and local responsibility areas (CAL FIRE 2024).

The Encinitas Fire Department is the primary agency responsible for wildfire protection in the program area. The Fire Prevention Bureau also implements various programs such as weed and vegetation abatement and enforces the Encinitas Fire Code to improve public safety. EMC Section 10.04.010 adopts the 2021 International Fire Code and the 2022 California Fire Code, which contains regulations regarding defensible space, vegetation management, and fire safety during construction.

3.20.2 Discussion

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would include improvements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. These projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and could alter existing roadways that serve as emergency access routes, which would have the potential to impair adopted emergency response plans. As discussed in Section 3.17.2(d), all improvements within roadway rights-of-way would be designed in compliance with the California Fire Code, which is adopted by reference in Chapter 10.04 of the EMC. The California Fire Code requires the width of an unobstructed roadway to measure no less than 24 feet in order to provide adequate access for fire and emergency responders. Additionally, the *Engineering Design Manual* identifies how to maintain clear routes for emergency vehicles during construction activities. Project plans would be subject to review by the City to ensure that adequate access is provided for fire and emergency responders during operations of VMT-reducing projects.

Construction activities for VMT-reducing projects would occur within roadway rights-of-way and may require temporary lane closures or result in other traffic disruptions. Encroachment permits from the City would be required for all work within public rights-of-way. As a requirement of encroachment permit approval, project proponents would be required to develop a traffic control plan and would be flagged and barricaded to the satisfaction of the City Inspector in compliance with the "Work Area Traffic Control Handbook," latest edition published by Building News, Inc and the *Engineering Design Manual*. Compliance with the encroachment permit and traffic control plan would ensure that adequate access is provided for fire and emergency responders for the duration of construction activities. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. This impact is less than significant.

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. As discussed in Section 3.14, "Population and Housing," VMT-reducing projects that would be implemented as part of the Program would not include the construction of new housing and do not propose changes to policies or regulations related to land use or residential zoning. Additionally, VMT-reducing projects would not introduce new occupants that could be exposed to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of as wildfire. Furthermore, VMT-reducing projects would be primarily within developed roadway rights-of-way where wildfire risk is low. No impact would occur.

c) Require the installation 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?

Less than significant. VMT-reducing projects that would result in the construction of new pedestrian and bicycle facilities could alter existing roadways. No other infrastructure (such as new roads, 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 are proposed. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Fire Hazard Severity Zones online interactive map, the program area is near, but not within a very high, high, or moderate fire hazard severity zone. In addition, enforcement of the California Fire Code would require the implementation of fire safety measures during construction. Safety measures would include prohibiting smoking except in approved areas and ensuring proper use of motorized equipment so that exhausts do not discharge against combustible material and refueling would not occur while in equipment was in operation. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not exacerbate fire risks. This impact is less than significant.

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?

Less than significant. Wildfire can significantly alter the hydrologic response of a watershed by reducing vegetative cover and altering soil characteristics. As a result, subsequent rainstorms after wildfire can produce landslides and debris flows, which can affect people or structures that are located below an area that has burned. Ground disturbing activities have the potential to destabilize soils, exacerbating post-fire landslide and debris flow hazards.

Construction of VMT-reducing projects would require minor grading, excavation, and other ground disturbance. As discussed in Section 3.7, "Geology and Soils," the program area contains landslide hazard areas, which are located along the coastal bluffs and hillsides in eastern communities such as New Encinitas and Olivenhain. However, ground disturbing activities for VMT-reducing projects would generally occur in disturbed areas within roadway rights-of-way where existing transportation infrastructure is present. These projects would not typically occur on steep slopes and would also be required to comply with the City *Engineering Design Manual*, which specifies grading and erosion control standards (City of Encinitas 2009). Furthermore, as discussed in Section 3.20.2(c), VMT-reducing projects would not exacerbate fire risk, and thus would not result in a substantial increase in post-fire flooding and landslide due to an increase in wildfire risk itself. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. This impact is less than significant.

3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XX. Mandatory Findings of Significance.				
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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.21.1 Environmental Setting

Environmental settings provided throughout Sections 3.1 to 3.20 were used in preparing the impact discussion for this section.

3.21.2 Discussion

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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.1, "Aesthetics"; Section 3.3, "Air Quality"; Section 3.8, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions"; Section 3.9, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials"; Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality"; and Section 3.13, "Noise," project construction would result in short-term and temporary changes to the visual environment; increases in air pollutants, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise levels; erosion and degradation of water quality; and potential releases of hazardous materials into the environment. However, through compliance with applicable permits, programs, and regulations during construction, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment.

As described in Section 3.4, "Biological Resources," VMT-reducing projects would be located in developed areas within roadway rights-of-way, such as on existing roads and sidewalks, or in disturbed areas along roadway shoulders. These projects would be located in areas that lack habitat for fish or wildlife species. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not have potential to 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.

As described in Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources," VMT-reducing projects would not involve the demolition, destruction, alteration, or structural relocation of a historical resource. Projects would be required to comply with applicable City review and design requirements governing public right-of-way improvements within historic districts. Additionally, as described in Section 3.5, "Cultural Resources"; Section 3.7, "Geology and Soils"; and Section 3.18, "Tribal Cultural Resources," ground disturbance would be limited to shallow depths, comprised of artificial fill or previously disturbed soils, within developed roadway rights-of-way. Therefore, archaeological resources, cemeteries or burials, paleontological resources, and tribal cultural resources are unlikely to be encountered during construction activities. Furthermore, projects would be required to comply with applicable policies and regulations governing the protection of cultural and paleontological resources. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

Through compliance with applicable permits, programs, and regulations, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not 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 an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. This impact is less than significant.

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.)

Less than significant. Cumulative environmental effects are multiple individual effects that, when considered together, would be considerable or compound or increase other environmental impacts. Individual effects may result from a single project or a number of separate projects and may occur at the same place and point in time or at different locations and over extended periods of time.

As described in Sections 3.1 through 3.20 of this IS/proposed ND, construction activities would result in short-term and temporary effects on the environment, including the following: changes to the visual setting; increases in air pollutants and noise levels; erosion and degradation of water quality; potential releases of hazardous materials into the environment; and increases in demand for utilities and services. Construction-related effects would be localized within the immediate vicinity of each project site and would cease following the construction period. Additionally, compliance with applicable permits, programs, regulations referenced throughout this IS/proposed ND would minimize impacts such that construction-related impacts would not contribute to a cumulative effect when combined with the effects of other cumulative projects.

As described in Sections 3.1 through 3.20 of this IS/proposed ND, operation of VMT-reducing projects would not result in substantially adverse environmental effects. Rather, VMT-reducing projects would reduce vehicle trips, with the co-benefits of reducing air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. Therefore, operations-related impacts would not contribute to a cumulative effect when combined with the effects of other cumulative projects.

Reasonably foreseeable future development in the city would be subject to the same land use and environmental regulations as described throughout this IS/proposed ND. Development projects within the City are guided by policies identified in the City's General Plan and by the regulations established in the EMC. Compliance with these

local regulations would minimize the combined effects of the related projects, thereby minimizing the potential for those effects to combine with VMT-reducing projects to produce a cumulatively considerable impact. Based on the above discussion, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to environmental impacts. This impact is less than significant.

c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than significant. As discussed in Section 3.3, "Air Quality"; Section 3.8, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions"; Section 3.9, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials"; Section 3.10, "Hydrology and Water Quality"; Section 3.13, "Noise"; and Section 3.17, "Transportation"; project construction would result in the short-term and temporary increases in air pollutants, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise levels; degradation of water quality; potential releases of hazardous materials into the environment; and disruptions to the transportation network. However, through compliance with applicable permits, programs, and regulations during construction, these environmental effects would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Furthermore, these construction-related effects would be offset by the overall net benefits of long-term VMT reduction and associated air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions reductions from implementation of the Program. Therefore, implementation of VMT-reducing projects under the Program would not result in substantial adverse effects on human beings. This impact is less than significant.

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None

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3.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

None

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