

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The State of California Department of Transportation (Department) proposes to widen State Route 74 (SR-74) from two lanes to four lanes from Calle Entradero (Post mile [PM]1.0) to the City of San Juan Capistrano (City)/County of Orange (County) limits (eastern City limit) PM 1.9. The Department is the Lead Agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City is a Responsible Agency under CEQA. The total length of the project is approximately 0.9 mile (mi). Figures 1-1 and 1-2 show the regional location and project vicinity maps.

SR-74, also known as Ortega Highway, is a major east-west arterial in south Orange County extending from Interstate 5 (I-5) in the City northeast to Riverside County where it intersects with Interstate 15 (I-15). SR-74 then extends further northeast toward the City of Palm Desert in Riverside County.

The existing SR-74 alignment consists of four through lanes from I-5, then turns into three through lanes and then at approximately 330 feet (ft) east of Calle Entradero, it transitions to two through lanes. The alignment of the existing roadway imposes driving restrictions such as limited sight distance and difficulties in negotiating sharp curves.

Five roadways intersect with SR-74 from the south, within the project limits as shown in Figure 1-4 (Figure 1-4 is provided later in this chapter). They are: Calle Entradero, Via Cordova, Via Cristal, Via Errecarte, and Avenida Siega. North of SR-74, Via Cordova becomes Hunt Club Drive, and Avenida Siega becomes Shade Tree Lane, Via Cristal and Via Errecarte are T-intersections. Additionally, to the north of SR-74, Strawberry Lane, Toyon Drive and Palm Hill Drive provide access to hillside private properties.

Sidewalks exist intermittently throughout the project area on the north and south sides of SR-74. These sidewalks begin outside the western limits of the project.

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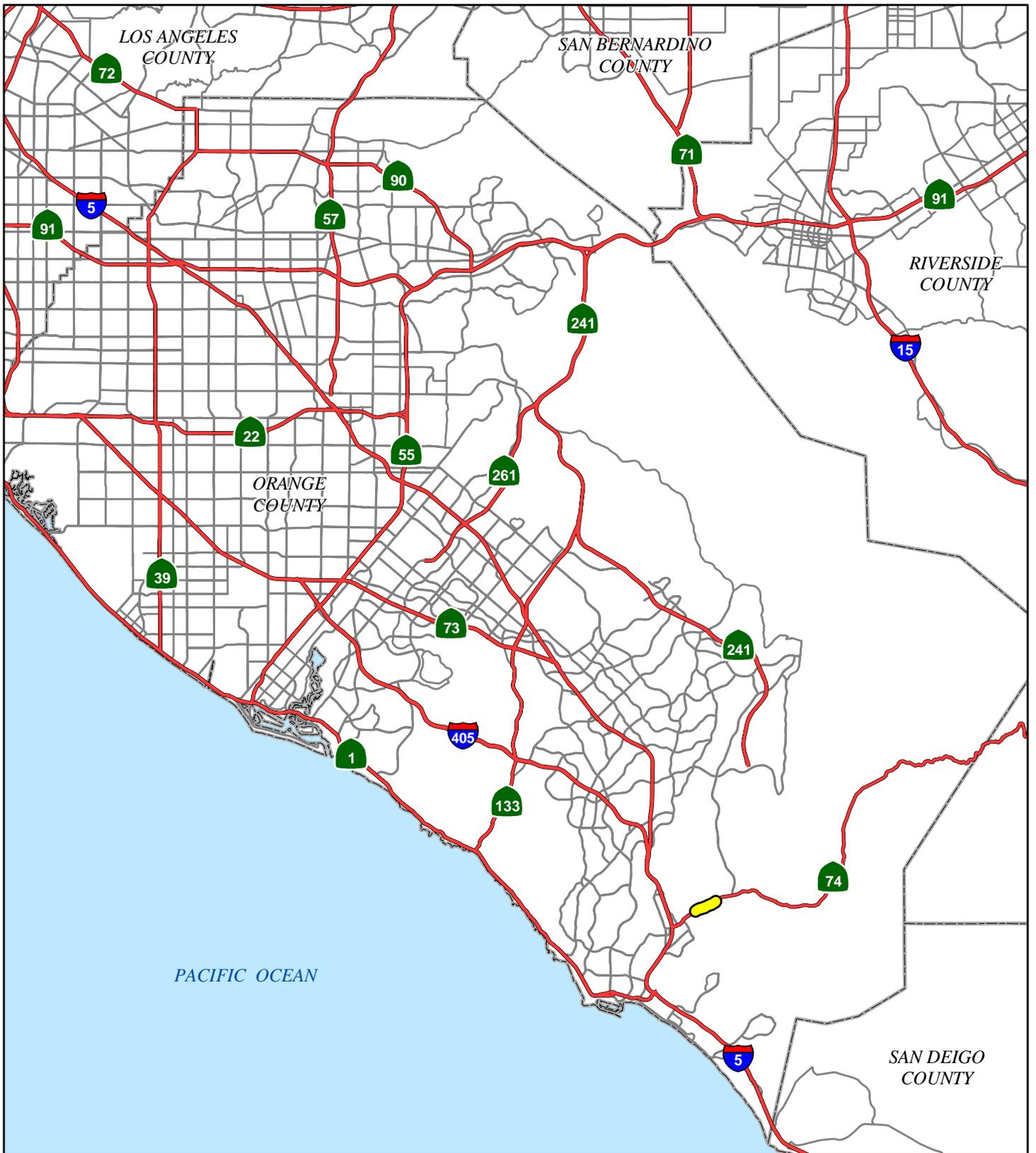
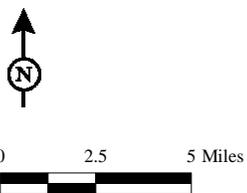


FIGURE 1-1



Project Study Area

Lower SR-74 Widening Project
Regional Location Map

12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9 (KP 1.7/3.0)
 EA# 086920

SOURCE: Thomas Bros. (2007).

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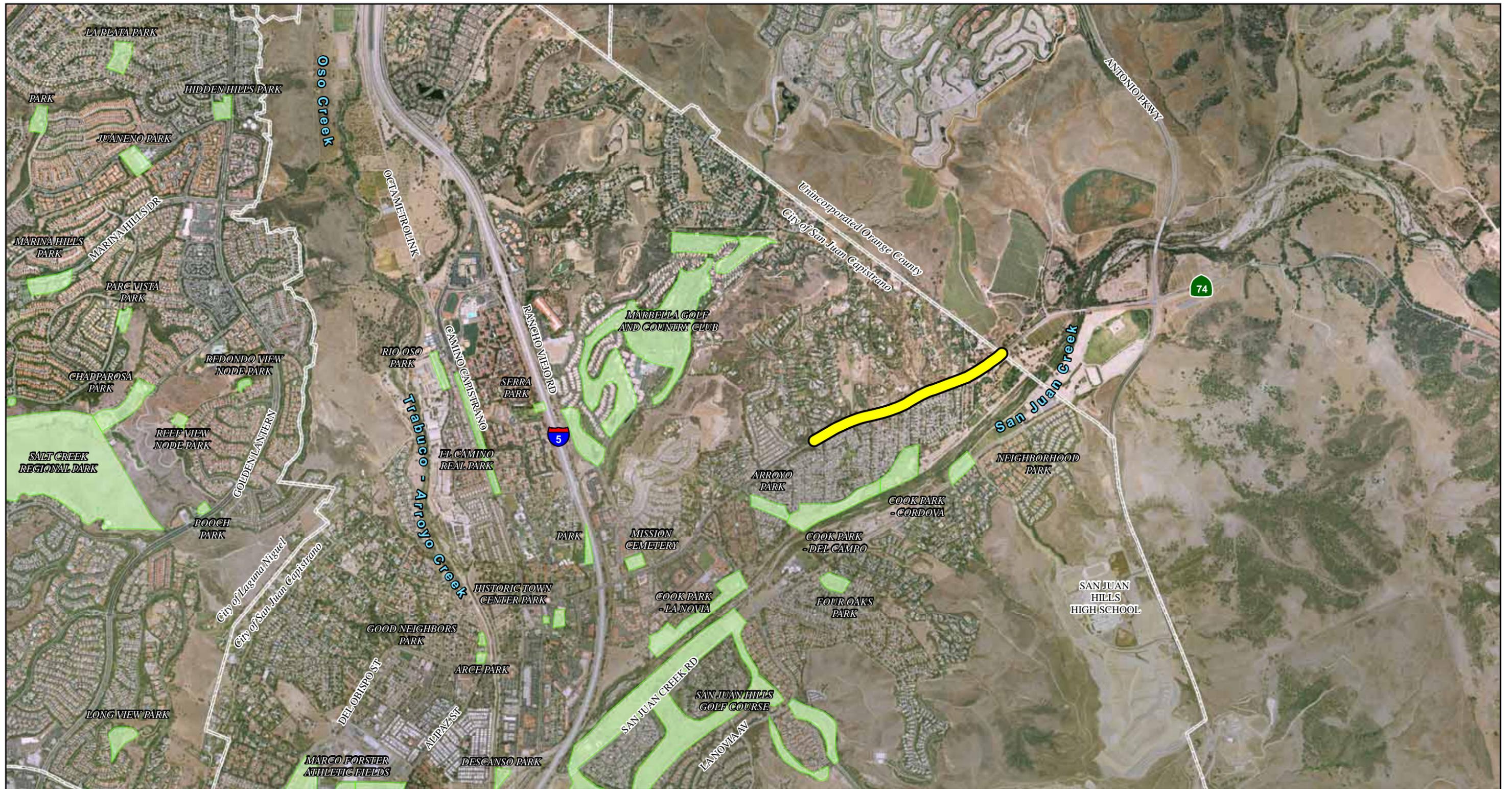


FIGURE 1-2



Lower SR-74 Widening Project
 Project Vicinity Map
 12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9 (KP 1.7/3.0)
 EA# 086900

SOURCE: Air Photo USA (2007), Thomas Bros (2007).

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1.2 Project Background

SR-74 was constructed circa 1930/32 from plans prepared for Joint Highway District 15. In 1959, this route was included within the State Freeway and Expressway System. The road was originally designed to be two lanes; each lane being 31 ft wide with a maximum grade of six percent, for vehicle speeds of 25 miles per hour (mph) to 40 mph. The current posted speed limit within the project limits is 45 mph.

Currently, SR-74 in its entirety provides interregional access between south Orange County and Riverside County. This particular section of SR-74 serves commuter traffic from the adjacent residential communities, Riverside County and interregional recreational traffic. The highway alignment follows and crosses San Juan Creek to the north. During weekday morning and afternoon peak operating hours, commuters who travel from Riverside County to southern Orange County commonly use SR-74. Recreational traffic is common during the weekends.

The Project Study Report (PSR) was approved by the Department on December 15, 1997. A scoping document was sent to interested parties and agencies on February 18, 2000. Also, an informal scoping meeting was held on July 19, 2000, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of Ambuehl Elementary School, at 28001 San Juan Creek Road in the City. Several issues were raised such as increased noise impacts, sound barriers, and traffic noise.

In 2004, the Department provided conceptual design plans to the City for its input. At that time, the design plans proposed to construct approximately 1,500 linear ft of 12- to 15 ft high concrete retaining walls along the north side of SR-74 and about 3,400 linear ft of approximately 16 ft high masonry sound walls along the south side to allow for widening to two lanes on each side. Based on input from the City, the roadway design was modified to provide for views of the San Juan Canyon and the Santa Ana Mountain ridgelines and enhances the rural character of the roadway that is consistent with goals of the City General Plan.

An Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS [Proposed MND]) was circulated in July 2007 that addressed the environmental effects of the proposed widening and a public meeting was conducted the same month. A copy of the IS (Proposed MND) is on file and available for review at the Department District 12.

During the July 2007 public meeting, the Department shared the conclusions of the IS (Proposed MND) with the public to seek comments and ideas regarding the alternatives presented in this document.

As a result of the previous meetings, consultations, and the nature of the public comments received on the IS (Proposed MND), the Department decided that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be prepared to analyze the environmental impacts for the proposed SR-74 widening from Calle Entradero (PM 1.0) to the City/County limits. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated for public review for a 30-day period from January 18 to February 19, 2008. Each substantive environmental comment received on the IS (Proposed MND) has been considered and addressed in the Final EIR. These comments can be found in Appendix H (bound separately). Technical studies completed for the IS (Proposed MND) have been updated with additional analyses to ensure that comments were addressed for the Final EIR. A list of these studies can be found in Appendix F.

The County prepared the Ranch Plan Final Program EIR (FEIR) 589 (November 2004) and an Addendum to FEIR 589 (July 2006) that included evaluations of the widening of SR-74 from the City/County line to the east of San Antonio/La Pata intersection (County portion). In addition, two other environmental documents have been prepared by the County and resource agencies for subregional planning programs that have incorporated the widening of SR-74 in their assumptions. Since an environmental document was already prepared that analyzed the County portions (which began construction in fall 2008), the Project Development Team (PDT), a group consisting of the Department, City, environmental consultants, and engineering consultants determined that the Department must only prepare an environmental document for the City portions from Calle Entradero to the City/County line. Hence, the Project Limits for this environmental document are from Calle Entradero to the City/County line. The preliminary project plans are included in Appendix G – Preliminary Design Layouts.

The project is included in the SCAG financially constrained 2008 RTIP Including Amendments 1-4, 7 and 10, Project ID: ORA120507. Description: “Widen Route 74 from 2 to 4 lanes (in San Juan Capistrano from Calle Entradero to City/County Line. Widen from 2 to 4 lanes).” The description of the project in the 2008 RTIP is consistent with the portion of the proposed project in the City to the County limits. As a separate project, SR-74 is being widened, from the City/County limits to Antonio

Parkway, by the County. The page from the 2008 RTIP that cites the proposed project is provided in Appendix D.

1.2.1 Project Funding

Projects must be listed in the RTIP in order to acquire funding. The 2008 RTIP lists the project as being funded as part of the 2008 State Transportation Implementation Program (STIP) Augmentation.

1.3 Purpose and Need

1.3.1 Project Purpose

The purpose of the project is to accomplish the following specific objectives:

- Relieve existing and future traffic congestion and improve the flow of traffic on SR-74.
- Accommodate planned growth and development in the surrounding areas.
- Provide improvements consistent with local planning documents.
- Gap closure.

The project is a proposed solution to the deficiency identified in the need statement below.

1.3.2 Project Need

As previously indicated in Section 1.1, SR-74 serves as a key connection route, between Orange and Riverside Counties. The closest other roadways that provide this connection are State Route 91 (SR-91), approximately 26 mi to the north, and State Route 76 (SR-76), approximately 32 mi to the south. Both of these facilities are heavily traveled. As a result of the distance to alternative connectors, SR-74 experiences a consistent amount of regional traffic, despite the rural design of much of the roadway. In addition to serving this regional demand, the subject segment of SR-74 also serves as a primary access to the City. Because of topography, SR-74 is one of the few arterial highways within the City that extends to the east beyond I-5.

The City developed a Circulation Element as part of the General Plan for City planning policies. The plan evaluates the transportation needs of the community within the framework of the planned transportation network of the county, region and state. The County Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) and the City designate Ortega Highway as a primary arterial highway, a four-lane divided roadway. In Table C-6 of the City’s Circulation Element, the widening of the Ortega Highway is planned as a long-range roadway improvement and is to be widened to four lanes, from Calle Entradero to the east City limits.

The City has a 2002 Strategic Transportation Plan (STP) that includes the widening of Ortega Highway. The plan evaluated local and regional transportation issues and land development projects to assess the significant traffic impacts on the City’s streets and State highways.

The need for this project is based on an assessment of the existing and future transportation demand, and current and predicted future traffic on SR-74 as measured by level of service (LOS). LOS is based on the ratio of traffic volume to the design capacity of the facility. It is expressed as a range from LOS A (free traffic flow with low volumes and high speeds resulting in low densities) to LOS F (traffic volumes exceed capacity and result in forced flow operations at low speeds resulting in high densities). The following discussion demonstrates existing and forecast traffic demand on SR-74.

1.3.2.1 Deficiencies

Increasing traffic on SR-74 has degraded the highway LOS, particularly during the peak hours. During the a.m. peak hour, the highway experiences between LOS D and LOS E and during the p.m. peak period, LOS D (see Table 1-1).

Table 1-1 Existing and Future Levels of Service (LOS)

Location		Existing LOS	2035 LOS (No Build)	2035 LOS (Build)
SR-74 west of Via Cordova	AM	E	F	C
	PM	D	F	C
SR-74 west of Via Cristal	AM	D	F	C
	PM	D	F	B
SR-74 west of Avenida Siega	AM	D	F	C
	PM	D	F	B
SR-74 east of Avenida Siega	AM	D	F	C
	PM	D	F	B

Source: Draft State Route 74 Lower Ortega Highway Widening Traffic Study (Austin-Foust Associates, July 2008)
 SR-74 = State Route 74

The existing SR-74 is four through lanes (two travel lanes in each direction) from I-5 to approximately 330 ft east of Calle Entradero, where it transitions to three through lanes and then to two through lanes (one travel lane in each direction). The widening of SR-74 east of the City limits, known as the Lower 74 Widening Project-County Portion, is currently being widened to four through lanes from 2,000 ft east of the Antonio Parkway/La Pata Avenue intersection to City limits. Following construction of the County portions of the SR-74 widening, there will be four through lanes both east and west of the project limits for the City portions. Therefore, the two-lane section of SR-74 proposed to be widened to four lanes under the City portions is an existing choke point that results in traffic congestion as the roadway narrows to two lanes east of Calle Entradero. The City portions would provide a gap closure that would relieve traffic congestion by widening SR-74 to four lanes through the project limits. Construction of the City portions of the SR-74 widening would provide a gap closure that would relieve traffic congestion by widening SR-74 to four lanes through the project limits.

1.3.2.2 Projected Deficiencies

Traffic congestion through the project area is expected to increase with the continued growth in the region. As shown in Table 1-1, by 2035, the LOS on SR-74 is projected to deteriorate to substandard levels and there would be considerable delays. The mainline would operate at LOS F in 2035 in the peak hours if SR-74 is not improved. Figure 1-3, illustrates the six levels of service for a two-lane highway based on the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual.

1.3.2.3 Social and Economic Demands

A review of the growth projections adopted by SCAG indicates continuing growth in the region that the project serves. The population in Orange County is expected to increase from 2.8 million in 2000 to over 3.7 million in 2035, an increase of nearly 25 percent. Growth in Riverside County is projected to increase from 1.5 million in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2000) to 3.6 million in 2035 (Riverside County Projections 2006), an increase of 140 percent. This regional growth will continue to place a high demand on SR-74.

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LEVELS OF SERVICE

for Two-Lane Highways

Level of Service	Flow Conditions	Operating Speed (mph)	Technical Descriptions
A		55+	Highest quality of service. Free traffic flow with few restrictions on maneuverability or speed. No delays
B		50	Stable traffic flow. Speed becoming slightly restricted. Low restriction on maneuverability. No delays
C		45	Stable traffic flow, but less freedom to select speed, change lanes or pass. Minimal delays
D		40	Traffic flow becoming unstable. Speeds subject to sudden change. Passing is difficult. Minimal delays
E		35	Unstable traffic flow. Speeds change quickly and maneuverability is low. Significant delays
F			Heavily congested traffic. Demand exceeds capacity and speeds vary greatly. Considerable delays

Source: 2000 HCM, Exhibit 20-2, LOS Criteria for Two-Lane Highways in Class 1

FIGURE 1-3

Lower SR-74 Widening Project
 LOS for Two-Lane Highways
 12-ORA-74 PM1.0/1.9 (KP 1.7/3.0)
 EA#086900

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1.4 Project Description

This section describes the Proposed Action and the design alternatives that were developed to achieve the project purpose and need while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. The proposed project would widen SR-74 by adding one through lane in each direction, east and west bound from Calle Entradero to the City/County line. This environmental document has evaluated the two Build Alternatives, Alternative 1, Northside widening, eliminating existing sidewalk, north of SR-74; Alternative 2, Northside widening, a straight sidewalk replacement, north of SR-74; and the No Build Alternative.

1.5 Alternatives

1.5.1 Common Features of the Build Alternatives

The following project features are common design elements for both of the Build Alternatives:

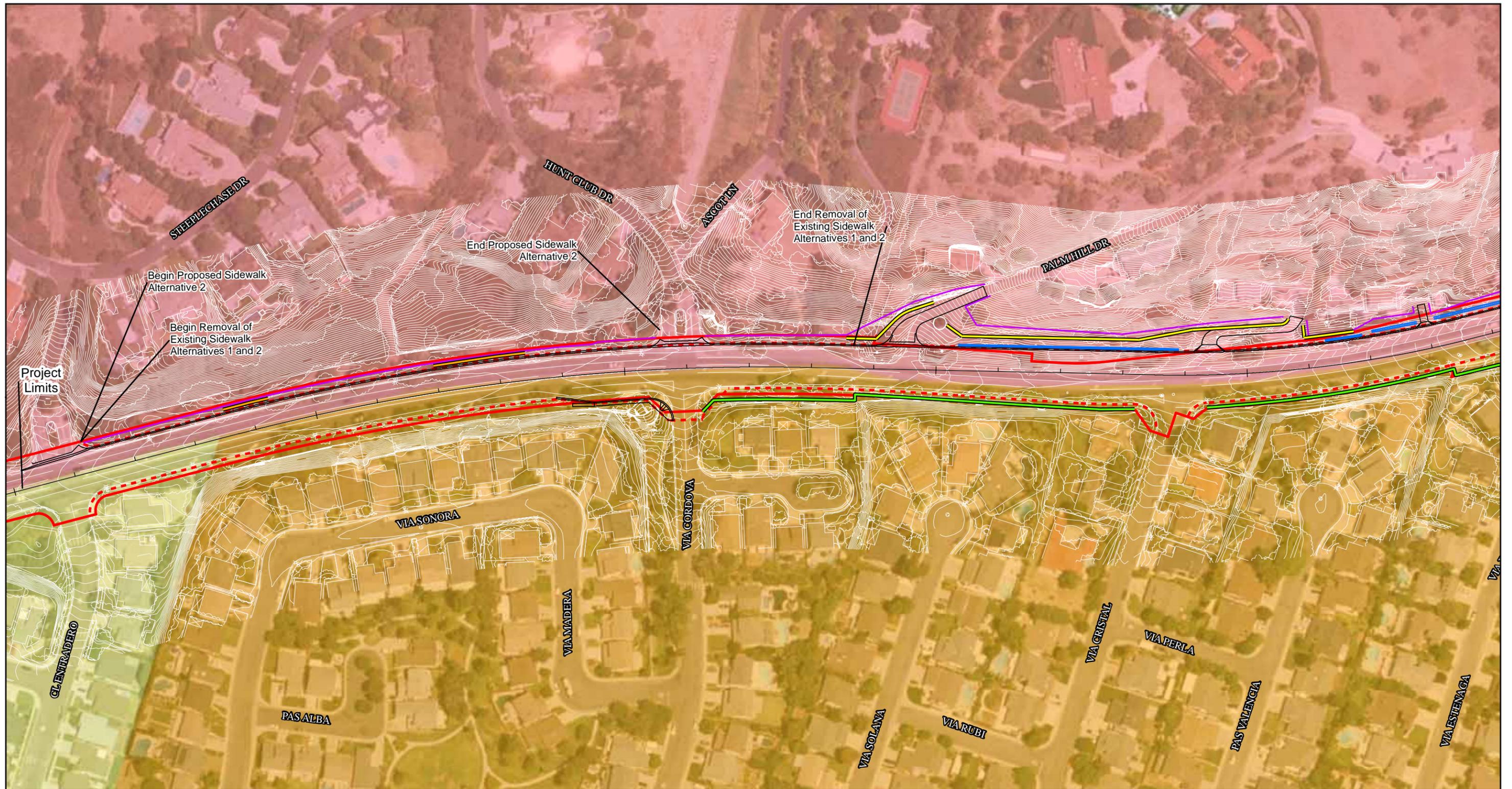
1.5.1.1 Intersection Improvements

There are five roadways that intersect with SR-74 from the south within the Project Limits: Calle Entradero, Via Cordova, Via Cristal, Via Errecarte, and Avenida Siega as shown in Figure 1-4, Project Location Map. North of SR-74, Via Cordova becomes Hunt Club Drive, and Avenida Siega becomes Shade Tree Lane. Additionally, to the north, Palm Hill Drive and Toyon Drive provide access to private property. Each intersection would be modified/widened to accommodate the additional lanes, median, and shoulders. At intersections where there are existing right-turn pockets (Via Cordova and Via Cristal), the right-turn pocket would remain (Appendix G – Preliminary Design Layouts). No new intersections are proposed.

1.5.1.2 Driveways

On the north side of SR-74 within the Project Limits, there are 11 existing driveways. Each of the 11 driveways would be modified to meet the grade of the widened roadway and to include reconstruction of the curb return. These driveways would be designed in order to maintain sight distance and to avoid safety issues. Along the south side east of the Project Limits, there are currently two paved driveways. These would be paved and modified to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). No new driveways are proposed.

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LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| — Project Improvements | — Proposed Retaining Wall (Only represented in Alternative 2) | Land Use |
| — TCE (Chain Link Fence) | - - - Proposed Right-of-Way | Very Low-Density Residential |
| — Drainage | — Existing Right-of-Way | Medium Low-Density Residential |
| — Proposed Retaining Wall | — City Boundary | Medium-Density Residential |
| — Proposed Sound Wall | | |

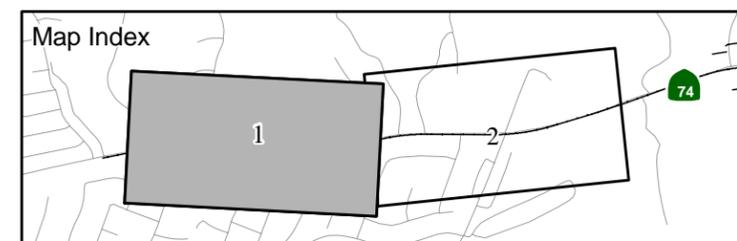
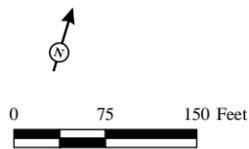
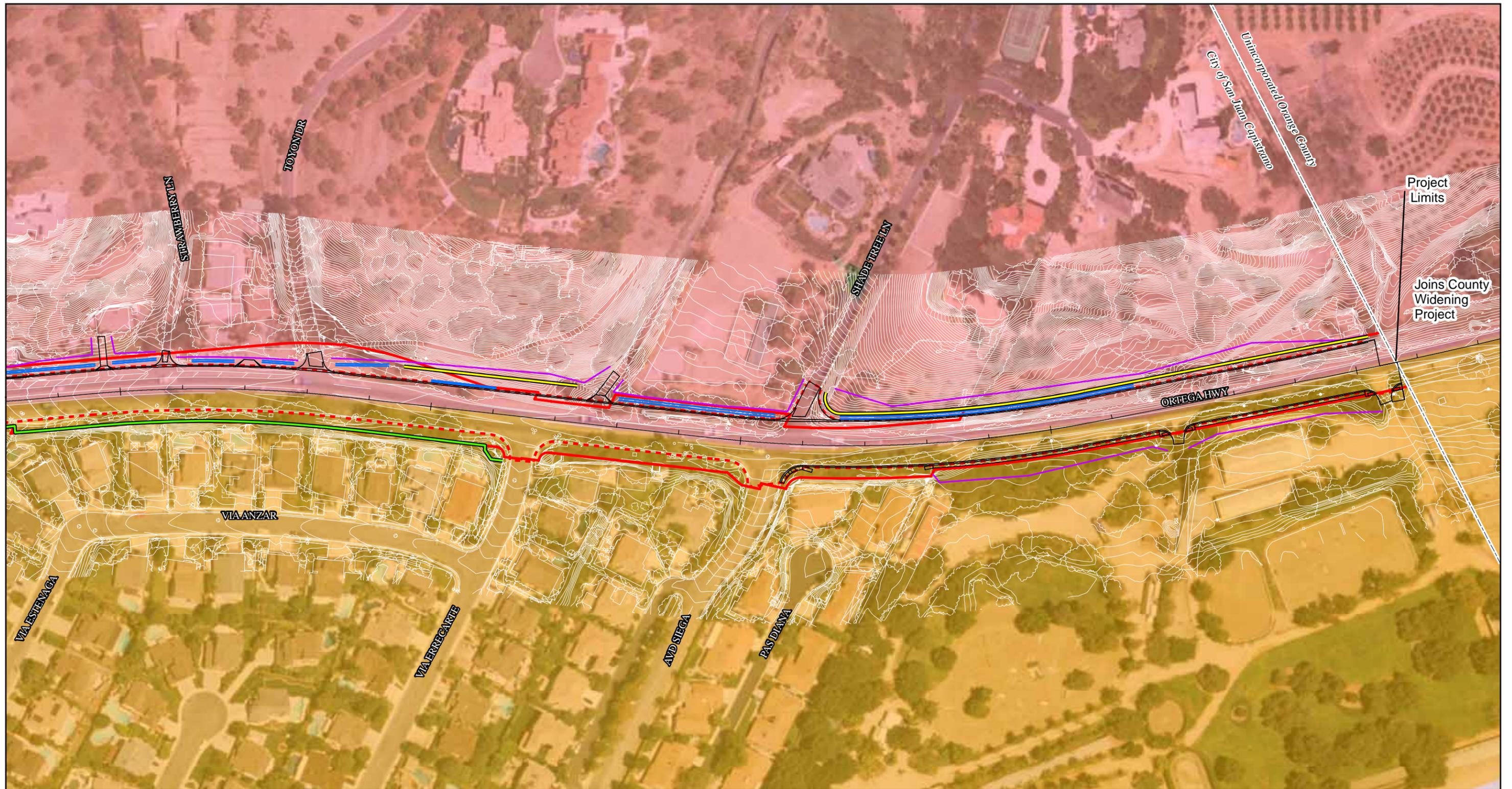


FIGURE 1-4
Sheet 1 of 2

Lower SR-74 Widening Project
Project Location Map
12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9 (KP 1.7/3.0)
EA# 086920

SOURCE: Air Photo USA (2007), HDR Engineering (2007), City of San Juan Capistrano (2008), Thomas Bros (2007).

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LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| — Project Improvements | — Proposed Retaining Wall (Only represented in Alternative 2) | Land Use |
| — TCE (Chain Link Fence) | - - - Proposed Right-of-Way | Very Low-Density Residential |
| — Drainage | — Existing Right-of-Way | Medium Low-Density Residential |
| — Proposed Retaining Wall | — City Boundary | Medium-Density Residential |
| — Proposed Sound Wall | | |

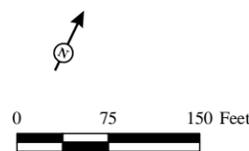


FIGURE 1-4
Sheet 2 of 2

Lower SR-74 Widening Project
Project Location Map
12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9 (KP 1.7/3.0)
EA# 086920

SOURCE: Air Photo USA (2007), HDR Engineering (2007), City of San Juan Capistrano (2008), Thomas Bros (2007).

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Alternatives 1 and 2 would construct a retaining wall that would prevent access to SR-74 from an existing unpaved driveway located east of Shade Tree Lane and approximately 300 ft west of the City/County limits. When this parcel was subdivided, the vehicular access rights were relinquished with City approval. Any use of these access points along SR-74 is considered illegal. Additionally, this driveway is nonoperational for residential use due to its steep slope and unpaved condition.

1.5.1.3 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The existing sidewalk on the south side of SR-74 would be maintained in its current location with the exception of a portion of sidewalk at the intersection of Via Cordova, where the sidewalk would be shifted to the south and reconstructed to provide for the right-turn pocket at this intersection. A new sidewalk would be constructed to the east beyond Avenida Siega and would connect to the planned County sidewalk system to provide continuity and would be consistent with City and County goals (Appendix G – Preliminary Design Layouts).

Class II bicycle facilities are planned and would be provided on each side of the roadway as part of the 5 ft-wide paved shoulders throughout the Project Limits. These facilities would be in conformance with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Commuters Bikeways Strategic Plan (CBSP). The City’s General Plan states in its Circulation Element that there is the need to promote an extensive public bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails network. These bicycle facilities would comply with the City’s goals.

1.5.1.4 Right-of-way Acquisitions

The project would require sliver acquisitions from approximately 10 parcels adjacent to SR-74. No displacements or relocations would be required. Further discussion of the acquisitions is provided in Section 2.1.3, Community Impacts.

1.5.1.5 Cut and Fill

The roadway widening within the project limits would require cut slopes approximately 20 ft deep on the south side of SR-74 east of Via Cordova and between Via Cristal and Via Errecarte and a 700 ft long fill slope east of Avenida Siega up to 8 ft high. The designed cut slopes on the north side of SR-74 would require buttress keyways approximately three to five ft deep by 15 ft wide.

1.5.1.6 Drainage Improvements

Since most of the widening would occur on the north side of SR-74, all existing drainage facilities would be modified and extended to intercept flows at the proposed

edge of pavement. An additional seven drainage culverts would be added on the north side of SR-74 throughout the project limits. There would be no drainage systems added to the south side. However, existing drainage on the south side from Avenida Siega, where widening would occur to the City/County line, would be modified to intercept flows at the proposed edge of pavement.

1.5.1.7 Retaining Walls

There are five retaining walls on the north side of SR-74 under consideration as shown in Figure 1-4, all of which will be designed to meet Department Division of Structures requirements. They are:

- A 160 ft long, 2 to 16 ft high retaining wall on the north side of Palm Hill Drive.
- A 560 ft long, 2 to 20 ft high retaining wall from Palm Hill Drive to an access road.
- A 100 ft long, 2 to 10 ft high retaining wall just east of the above-mentioned access road.
- A 280 ft long, 2 to 14 ft high retaining wall between Toyon Drive and an access road.
- A 960 ft long, 8 to 24 ft high retaining wall between Shade Tree Lane to the City/County limits.

The wall type will be finalized during the design phase. Sample treatments are provided in Figure 1-5.

1.5.1.8 Noise Attenuation

As a project feature, two noise barriers are recommended for this project as a community enhancement to protect residences south of SR-74. They are:

- A 747 ft long, maximum of 16 ft high noise barrier on the south side of SR-74 from Via Cordova to Via Cristal.
- A 1,228 ft long, maximum of 16 ft high noise barrier on the south side of SR-74 from Via Cristal to Via Errecarte.

Both noise barriers would follow the alignment of the existing garden wall and construction would occur from the highway side thereby requiring minimal removal of existing vegetation. The height of the noise barrier (NB) No. 2 would be a maximum of 16 ft and NB No. 3 would be a maximum of 14 ft. from station number

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(STA) 27+06 to STA 28+43 and 16 ft. from STA 28+43 to STA 30+76.5.¹ (see Appendix I, Noise Attenuation). In a letter dated August 24, 2004, the City assured the Department that the City would fund the construction and maintenance of the noise barriers where the cost exceeded Department standard cost allocations. This letter can be found in Appendix C, Agency Correspondence.

There are two design variations for the noise barrier: Plexiglas® sound walls and Sound Fighter® sound walls. The use of Plexiglas® panels would maintain the existing views of the southerly hills and San Juan Creek Valley and would provide light and transparency for the adjacent properties. The Plexiglas® walls would be built on steel beams immediately in front of the existing garden walls and would have precast panels at the bottom of the Plexiglas® wall; the existing garden walls would not be exposed to the traveling public. The Sound Fighter® walls would eliminate potential reflective noise to the residents on the north side from the implementation of the noise barriers on the south side of SR-74. These walls would be constructed similar to the Plexiglas® walls but would be opaque. This environmental document evaluates both options. Figure 1-6 shows an illustration of a Plexiglas® sound wall and an illustration of a Sound Fighter® sound wall.

1.5.1.9 Signals and Lighting

Currently, there are no traffic signals within the project limits. This project does not warrant any signals at the existing intersections. However, in the future should there be a need for a signal/pedestrian crossing, the current design does not preclude the opportunity to install a signal. All streetlights affected by the widening of SR-74 would be relocated and replaced in kind.

1.5.1.10 Utilities

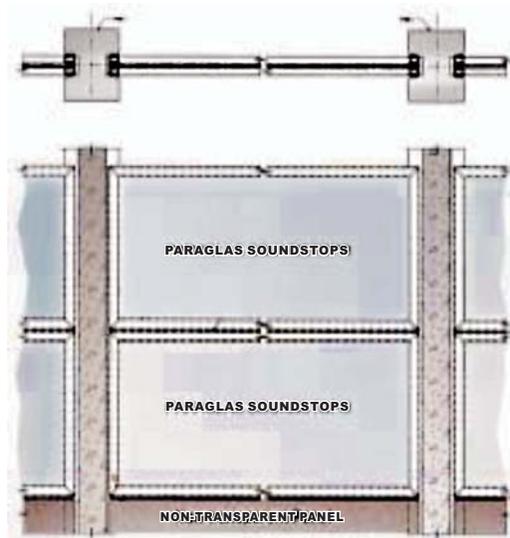
All utilities such as power, gas, sewer, and telephone lines impacted by this project would be relocated or replaced in-kind within the Project Limits.

1.5.1.11 Pavement Rehabilitation

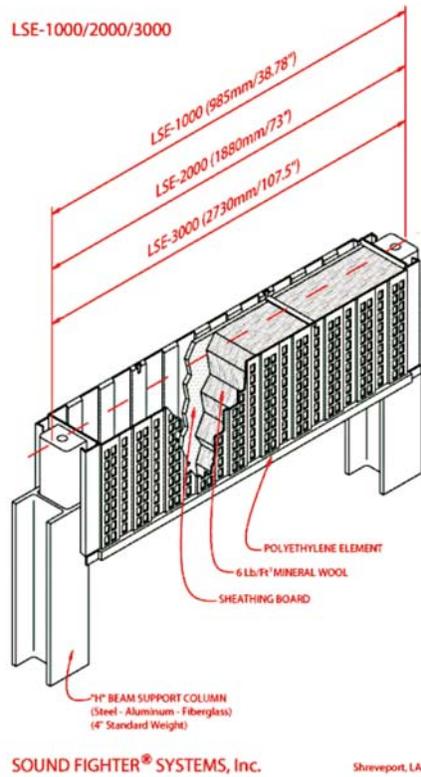
The project would also rehabilitate the existing pavement. The remaining existing pavement would be ground and overlaid with new Asphalt Concrete (AC) pavement to provide adequate strength to accommodate the projected 2035 traffic demand.

¹ Station numbers are based on the Department station designation numbering in metric units as shown in Figure I-1 located in Appendix I of this document.

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PLEXIGLAS® SOUND WALL



SOUND FIGHTER® SOUND WALL

FIGURE 1-6

Lower SR-74 Widening Project
 Glass Sound Wall and Sound Fighter® Sound Wall
 12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9
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1.5.1.12 Construction

Construction for this project is proposed to start Fiscal Year 2013/2014 and is anticipated to be completed within approximately eighteen months. No area is available within the Project Limits for exclusive use by the contractor (for staging). The highway right-of-way shall be used only for the purposes that are necessary to perform the required work.

A Traffic Management Plan (TMP), a standard condition placed on all construction projects, is designed to minimize construction activity-related motorist delays, queuing, and accidents by the effective application of traditional traffic-handling practices and innovative approaches. The TMP aims to relieve congestion and maintain traffic flow throughout the alternative routing and surrounding area within Riverside and Orange Counties. The preliminary TMP includes proposed Lane Closure Charts and Detour Plans. The TMP will be finalized by the time final designs are prepared. However, it is certain that one lane in each direction would be kept open at all times.

The TMP evaluates traffic mitigation strategies for the duration of construction, addresses lane closure requirements, and seeks to inform the public and motorists. The TMP strategies include: project phasing, a detour plan, provision of temporary lanes/shoulders, and reversible lanes. Traffic management strategies will also include a public awareness campaign, traffic systems and signage, and traffic support and safety elements. The public awareness element usually involves brochures, mailers, and/or media releases to educate and inform the public of the construction activities. The motorist information strategies include message signage and a highway advisory radio to alert the motorists of road closures and/or detours. Construction Alerts, detailing the project information, alternative routes, and the Transportation Helpline Telephone number, would be made available to residents, businesses, local officials, City Halls, and the Chambers of Commerce throughout local communities.

The traffic support and safety elements involve incident management. The Transportation Management Center (TMC) aids in facilitating communication between construction personnel, the traffic management team, traffic-control officers, and the TMP Coordinator. The TMP would include provisions to minimize delays and give access to emergency personnel such as police and fire departments. Serving as a communications center, the TMC would help expedite the removal of minor and major incidents, help make decisions concerning the closing and opening of lanes, and manage traffic by providing traffic information to the media.

1.5.2 Unique Features of Build Alternatives

1.5.2.1 Build Alternative 1

Build Alternative 1 would remove the existing meandering sidewalk on the north side of SR-74, east of Calle Entradero. This alternative would widen SR-74 on the north side to avoid reconstructing the south side sidewalk.

1.5.2.2 Build Alternative 2

The existing sidewalk on the north side of SR-74 between Calle Entradero and Via Cordova would be reconstructed to the north. The existing meandering sidewalk would be reconstructed as a straight sidewalk (not curvilinear) within the existing public right-of-way.

1.5.2.3 Retaining Walls

In addition to the five retaining walls discussed in Section 1.5.1.7, two additional short retaining walls would be constructed north of the new reconstructed sidewalk along the south edge of the existing equestrian trail.

1.5.2.4 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not include any improvements to the project and would result in LOS F operating conditions for the mainline, as shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Summary of Project Alternatives

Alt.	Width of Project	Partial Acquisitions	Trees to be Removed	Retaining Walls	Sound Walls	Consistent with Plans	LOS (2035)	Cost
1	Varies from 78–79 ft	10 parcels	111	5	2	Yes	B and C	\$26,100,000
2	Varies from 78–79 ft	10 parcels	111	7	2	Yes	B and C	\$26,200,000
No Build	No change	None	None	None	None	No	F	

Alt. = Alternative
 ft = feet
 LOS = level of service

SR-74 traffic would flow at less than 35 mph and result in significant delays. SR-74 would be maintained in its existing two-lane condition and would continue to be used by commuters, recreation traffic, and commercial trucks. The No Build Alternative is not consistent with regional and local transportation plans, would not alleviate existing and projected congestion in the study area, and would not meet the project

purpose and need. The No Build Alternative provides a baseline for comparing the effects associated with the Build Alternatives since the environmental document must consider the effects of not implementing the project.

1.5.3 Comparison of Alternatives

As shown in Table 1-2, Build Alternatives 1 and 2 are the same with the exception of the removal of the sidewalk along the north side of SR-74 between Calle Entradero and Via Cordova and the number of retaining walls. Alternative 1 would require five retaining walls whereas Alternative 2 would require seven retaining walls due to the reconstruction of the sidewalk on the north side of SR-74 between Calle Entradero and Via Cordova. The No Build Alternative would not be consistent with City and regional plans and would result in LOS F on SR-74 within the project limits. Therefore, the No Build Alternative would not meet the project purpose and need.

1.5.4 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

A meeting with the PDT for the proposed project was held at the Caltrans District 12 office, on Thursday, April 30, 2009. The purpose of the PDT meeting was to select the Preferred Alternative.

Both Build Alternatives 1 and 2 were evaluated based on the following Evaluation Criteria:

- Meeting the purpose and need
- Significant impacts
- Public input

Both Alternatives 1 and 2 would meet the purpose and need and the No Build Alternative would not meet the purpose and need as described in Section 1.3. Build Alternatives 1 and 2 are the same with the exception of the removal of the existing sidewalk along the north side of SR-74 between Calle Entradero and Hunt Club Drive and the number of retaining walls. As described in Section 2.1.6 Visual and Aesthetics, impacts to View 1 are considered significant as a result of the introduction of structures such as retaining walls, soundwalls, and the removal of existing vegetation, including trees. Both Build Alternatives would affect the same number of trees and soundwalls. However, Alternative 1 would require five retaining walls, whereas Alternative 2 would require seven retaining walls due to reconstruction of

the sidewalk on the north side of SR-74 between Calle Entradero and Hunt Club Drive. Also, Alternative 2 includes a sidewalk. Thus, Alternative 2 would introduce more urban structures into the existing viewshed than Alternative 1.

Alternative 2 would maintain pedestrian access on the northside of SR-74 from Calle Entradero to Hunt Club Drive through the replacement of the sidewalk. Although both Alternatives 1 and 2 have significant impacts to both visual resources (Key View 1) and to community character, Alternative 1 would have reduced impacts on the rural nature of the roadway by excluding urban features such as two retaining walls and a sidewalk in the western project limits.

Comments received during the public circulation period of the Draft EIR, indicated concern for continued access on the north side of the SR-74, by the replacement of the existing meandering sidewalk with a straight sidewalk (Alternative 2). Other comments received during the public review period of the Draft EIR indicated a preference to preserve the rural nature of the roadway by removing the sidewalk entirely (Alternative 1).

During the PDT meeting, the balance between maintaining public access and reducing environmental effects was discussed. Addressing public concerns and minimizing visual and community impacts were important factors in the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The public supported having a sidewalk and maintaining the existing public access (sidewalk) was determined to be vital. The PDT selected Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative primarily because it includes provision for a sidewalk, even though it is a higher cost alternative.

1.5.5 Environmental Decision Process

After the public circulation period, all substantive comments were considered, and the Department has selected a Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2). The Department has made the final determination of the project's effect on the environment. In accordance with CEQA, the Department has certified that the project complies with CEQA, prepared findings for all significant impacts identified, prepared a Statement of Overriding Considerations for impacts that will not be mitigated below a level of significance, and certified that the findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations have been considered prior to project approval. The Department has filed a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the State Clearinghouse that will identify that the project will have significant impacts, mitigation measures were included as

conditions of project approval, findings were made, and a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted. A copy of the CEQA findings and the Statement of Overriding Considerations are provided in Appendix K of this document.

1.5.6 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated

Four alternatives were considered but eliminated from further study and are discussed below. These decisions were based on the current roadway configurations. SR-74 from I-5 to Calle Entradero is a four-lane facility. The County is widening SR-74 from the City/County limits to east of La Pata Avenue. This project to widen SR-74 from Calle Entradero to the City/County limits is considered a gap closure and there are no other alternatives to redirect traffic within this segment of SR-74 without having significant impacts to the adjacent residential community.

1.5.6.1 Non-standard Roadway Widening (widening on both sides)

Rehabilitate and widen the existing roadway, from Calle Entradero at PM 1.0 to the City limit at PM 1.86, to match the existing cross section width west of Calle Entradero. The roadway cross section consists of four 12 ft lanes, a 12 ft painted median, two 2 ft curbs and gutter, and two 5 ft sidewalks. Right turn lanes would be provided for Via Cristal, Via Errecarte, and Avenida Siega.

Under this Alternative, the roadway would be widened on both sides; therefore, it would impact the mature trees and existing meandering sidewalks. The roadway would not provide standard shoulders and bike lanes and would be a safety issue.

1.5.6.2 Standard Roadway Widening (widening on both sides)

Rehabilitate and widen the existing roadway, from Calle Entradero at PM 1.0 to City limit at PM 1.86, with standard geometric cross section that includes four 12 ft lanes, a 12 ft painted median, and 8 ft shoulders. Right turn lanes would be provided for Via Cristal, Via Errecarte, and Avenida Siega.

Under this Alternative, the roadway would be widened on both sides which would require more right-of-way than Alternative 1. In addition, this Alternative would also affect the historical resource on the south, the existing equestrian trail, the existing driveways and the environmentally-sensitive areas on the north.

1.5.6.3 Multi-modal Alternative

There is a need for a multi-modal transportation corridor to connect Riverside County to SR-241 and I-5. No infrastructure for multi-modal transportation presently exists.

Construction of new infrastructure could have substantial impacts to environmental resources and would require large amounts of property acquisition. New routes to circumnavigate SR-74 would increase travel time for east and westbound travelers.

Among the widening of SR-74, other facilities are being improved to accommodate traffic generated by the Ranch Plan and other development in the area. The area immediately served by SR-74 within the City is generally built out. However, land to the east in unincorporated Orange County is primarily undeveloped. The Ranch Plan EIR identifies traffic improvements to the areas surrounding the City to alleviate anticipated growth from the development within unincorporated Orange County. This alternative did not contain elements to enhance the capacity of SR-74 to better accommodate the current and future traffic demands.

1.5.6.4 Non-standard Roadway Widening (widening to the north)

Rehabilitate and widen the existing roadway from Calle Entradero at PM 1.06 to the City limit at PM 1.86. Most of the road widening would be to the north. However, the portion from Avenida Siega to the City limits will require widening to the north and south. The roadway cross section consists of four 12 ft lanes, a 12 ft painted median, two 2 ft shoulders. Right turn lanes would be provided for Via Cristal, Via Errecarte, and Avenida Siega.

Under this Alternative, the roadway would not provide standard shoulders and bike lanes. The Department Project Development Coordinator did not approve the proposed 2 ft nonstandard shoulders.

1.6 Permits and Approvals Needed

As shown in Table 1-3, the following permits, reviews, and approvals will be required prior to the construction of the proposed project.

Table 1-3 Required Permits, Reviews, and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
ACOE	Section 404 Letter of Permission (LOP) or Nationwide Permit (NWP) 14	Department is to obtain letter or permit.
CDFG	Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement	Department is to obtain Agreement.
RWQCB	401 Water Quality Certification	Department is to obtain certification.

ACOE = United States Army Corps of Engineers
 CDFG = California Department of Fish and Game
 RWQCB = Regional Water Quality Control Board