

Section 2.1
Human Environment

2.1 Human Environment

2.1.1.1 Land Use

2.1.1.2 Regulatory Setting

A Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs

The City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan, adopted in 1999 and amended in 2002, is the primary source of long-range planning and policy direction used to guide growth and preserve the quality of life within the City of San Juan Capistrano (City). The General Plan consists of 12 separate elements and an implementation program, including the relevant Land Use and Circulation Elements. The form and distribution of future land use and development within the City are further guided by the City's Zoning Ordinance, as well as Specific Plans/Precise Plans, and Planned Communities and Redevelopment and Master Plans, which are created in harmony with the General Plan land use goals and policies. In addition, regional planning agencies, including the County of Orange, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the Department have developed regional plans for areas that encompass the City and project site. The following plans comprise the land use regulatory setting for the proposed project.

City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Land Use Element

The City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Land Use Element includes the following land use goals and policies applicable to the proposed project:

- Land Use Policy 1.1: Encourage a land composition in San Juan Capistrano that provides a balance or surplus between the generation of public revenues and the cost of providing public facilities and services.
- Land Use Goal 2: Control and direct future growth within the City to preserve the rural village-like character of the community.

City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element

The City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element includes the following land use-related goals and policies applicable to the proposed project:

- Circulation Goal 1: Provide a system of roadways that meets the needs of the community.
- Policy 1.5: Improve existing arterial systems that service regional circulation patterns in order to reduce local congestion (e.g., Ortega Highway at Interstate Highway 5 [I-5]).
- Policy 4.3: Install additional street improvements within areas where necessary to improve vehicular and nonvehicular safety.

In addition, reconstruction of the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange is listed on Table C-6 of the Circulation Element as one of the long-range roadway improvements needed to

avoid roadway and intersection impacts within the San Juan Capistrano Planning Area (City of San Juan Capistrano, 2002).

City of San Juan Capistrano Zoning Ordinance

The current City of San Juan Capistrano Zoning Ordinance and related zoning map (see Figure 2.1.1-1) were adopted in 1973 and have since been updated to incorporate changes to the City's General Plan Land Use Element. The Zoning Ordinance is the primary implementation tool for the Land Use Element, identifying specific types of land use, intensity of use, and development and performance standards applicable to specific areas within the City (City of San Juan Capistrano, 2002).

City of San Juan Capistrano Historic Town Center Master Plan

The City adopted the Historic Town Center Master Plan in 1995 to address specific economic needs and redevelopment opportunities in this portion of the downtown area. A portion of Ortega Highway located between El Camino Real and Del Obispo Street serves as the northern boundary of the Historic Town Center Master Plan. The proposed project alternative footprints are located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Historic Town Center Master Plan.

City of San Juan Capistrano Central Redevelopment Project Plan

The City adopted this 5-year implementation plan, along with creation of the City's Community Redevelopment Agency, in 1995 for redevelopment opportunities throughout the plan area. This plan continues to shape future land use and inform implementation of policies included in the General Plan Land Use Element with specific implementation projects planned through year 2009. The proposed footprints for Alternatives 3 and 5 are located entirely within the Redevelopment Project Area. The Redevelopment Project Area encompasses approximately 1,097 acres (12.6 percent of the City) and includes the I-5 corridor from the City limits on the north to the City limits on the south.

According to the Central Redevelopment Plan, the specific redevelopment objective relevant to the proposed project is to:

“Improve and construct, or provide for the construction of, public facilities, roads, and other public improvements and to improve the quality of the environment in the Project Area to the benefit of the Project Area and the general public.”

Orange County Transportation Authority

Ortega Highway at the I-5 interchange has been identified by the Department and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) as a “Choke Point” where substantial delay and congestion occur, necessitating improvement to alleviate the problem. In early 2006, the OCTA Board of Directors approved the proposed improvements at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange as one of the projects to be included in the OCTA Transportation Appropriations Project List for the 2007 fiscal year federal appropriations process. As such, the proposed project can be considered as a component of the OCTA mobility improvement goals.

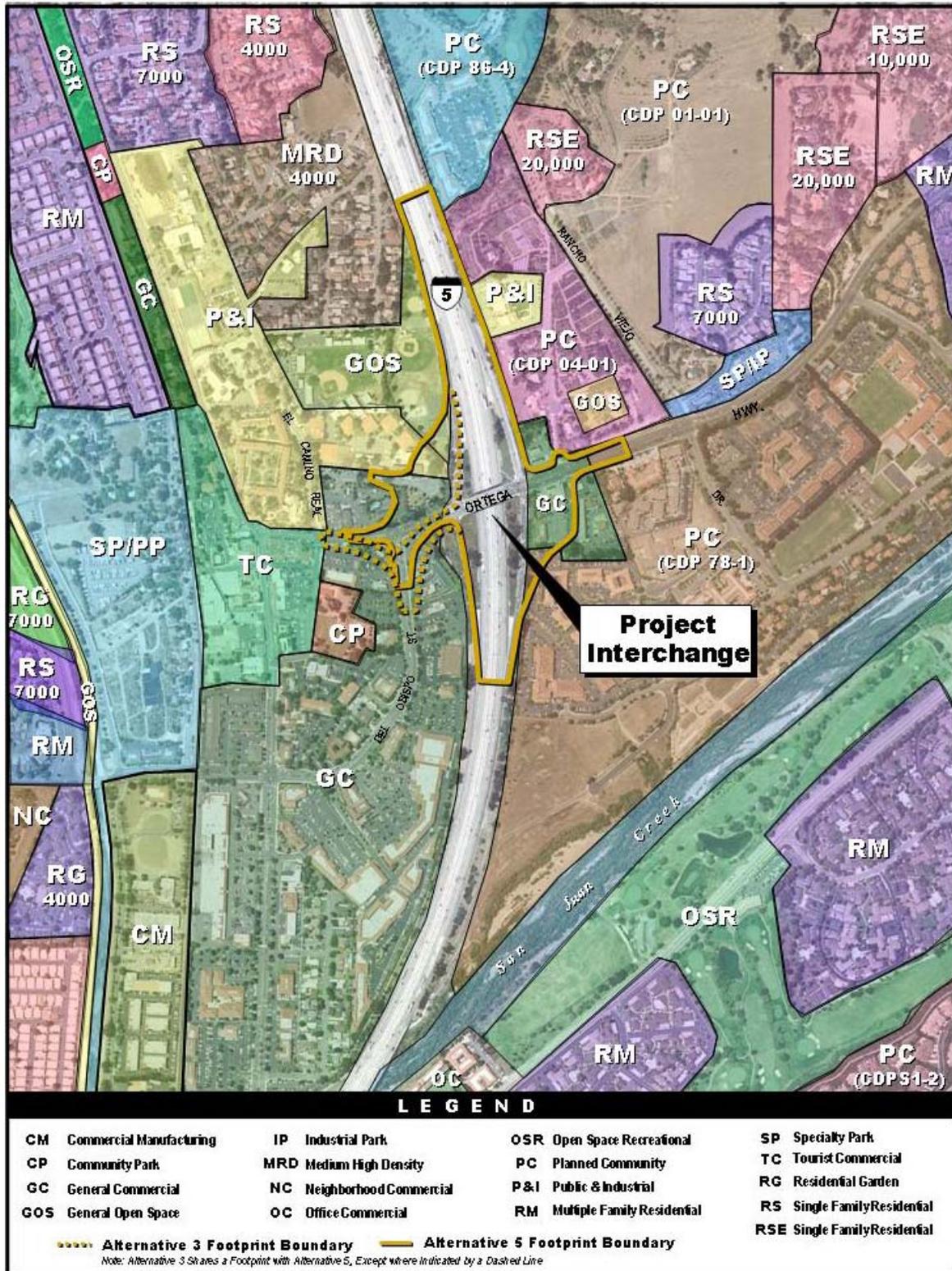


Figure 2.1.1-1
 Zoning Map

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SCAG Growth Management Plan and Regional Transportation Plan/ Regional Transportation Improvement Program

SCAG is a regional planning agency whose Growth Management Plan recommends methods to direct regional growth to minimize traffic congestion and better protect environmental quality. While SCAG has no authority to mandate implementation of its Growth Management Plan, the City has incorporated the Plan into the goals and policies of the City's General Plan.

This project is also included in SCAG's 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and in the 2006 cost-constrained RTIP. The RTP is a regional multimodal long-range plan that assesses transportation needs based on forecasted growth; implementation of the long-term transportation improvements described in the RTP is made through the RTIP, which is a listing of transportation projects within a 6-year period. The RTIP identifies the region's current priorities for mobility improvements.

Caltrans Route Concept Report SR-74 and I-5

The Route Concept Report (RCR) is a planning document developed by the Department following much study that describes the Department's conceptual improvements for a transportation route or corridor. RCRs are a tool for implementing interregional and statewide continuity of California's transportation network.

The SR-74 RCR, which was developed in 1986, includes the project interchange and proposes SR-74 as a primary roadway consisting of a 4-lane divided highway, which is consistent with the 2002 Orange County Master Plan of Arterial Highways. In addition to the above recommendation, the SR-74 and I-5 RCR, which was prepared in 2000, recommends improvements to increase the capacity of the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange to accommodate anticipated growth in south Orange County, as well as Riverside County.

2.1.1.3 Affected Environment

A Existing Land Use

The existing I-5/Ortega Highway interchange is located within an urbanized area of the City, and it provides the primary access to the City's downtown area. Ortega Highway is a major thoroughfare that runs perpendicular to Interstate Highway 5 (I-5) throughout the project area and serves as one of a few roadways that connect land uses east and west of I-5. Commercial use is the predominant land use category along Ortega Highway within the project vicinity; however, proposed reconfigurations of the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange would also occur in an adjacent residential neighborhood that is mixed with institutional uses.

The City and the downtown area are grounded in the history of the San Juan Capistrano Mission (Mission). A central commercial/retail area that caters to the tourist industry has developed along and around the location where the Mission fronts Ortega Highway. The City downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods to the west, northwest, and east of the interchange have a village-like layout and character. The project area east of I-5 is very different in character from the City downtown and surroundings that comprise

the downtown area located west of I-5. The area to the east does not have a village character, and it is instead largely developed with commercial uses, strip malls, business parks, and high-density residential developments. More detailed descriptions of the existing land use in the project area are provided in the sections below, with specific descriptions of the locational direction from the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange.

Land Uses Northwest of the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange

The area north of Ortega Highway located between the Mission and I-5 consists of various community services dispersed among residential properties. Community services in this area include the Municipal Library, La Sala Community Center, City Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club Scout Hut, Woman's Club, Chec Family Resource Center, Headstart Center, Adult School, Capistrano-Laguna Beach Regional Occupational Program, San Juan Elementary School, Calvary Church, Mission Basilica and associated Mission Parish School and Preschool, and Serra's Pantry and Outreach. Figure 2.1.1-2 shows the locations of these facilities and other major uses in the project area.

Portions of the San Juan Elementary School and Mission Inn Motel are located within the proposed project Alternative 5 footprint. San Juan Elementary School shares facilities with several community organizations, including the YMCA, which uses an existing building that is located within the project Alternative 5 footprint. The Mission Inn Motel is a small property located along Spring Street; it is across from the school campus and adjacent to a small, vacant lot.

The Calvary Church and Capistrano-Laguna Beach Regional Occupational Program are located on the same street block adjacent to the school campus and fronting El Camino Real. The historic Mission, Mission Parish School and Preschool, Serra's Pantry and Outreach, and Mission Basilica church are located across El Camino Real to the west from these properties.

With the exception of San Juan Elementary School and Mission Inn Motel, all of the aforementioned facilities are located outside of the proposed project Alternative 3 and 5 footprints to the west and northwest.

A vacant property fronts the north side of Ortega Highway in between El Camino Real and I-5, adjacent to the Mission Inn Motel property. A paved surface parking lot is located on the adjacent parcel to the west on the northwest corner of Ortega Highway and El Camino Real. There are preliminary plans to redevelop this property along with adjacent parcels into a hotel (Duport, 2007). No other development projects are planned in this area.

Figure 2.1.1-3 shows the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan land use designations of the area northwest of the project interchange as *General Commercial*, *Existing Public School*, *General Open Space*, *Public & Institutional*, and *Medium High Density (3.5 to 8 dwelling units [DUs] per Acre)*. Figure 2.1.1-1 shows the respective zoning designations including *P & I (Public and Institutional)*, *GOS (General Open Space)*, and *MRD-4000 (Mission Residential District)*.

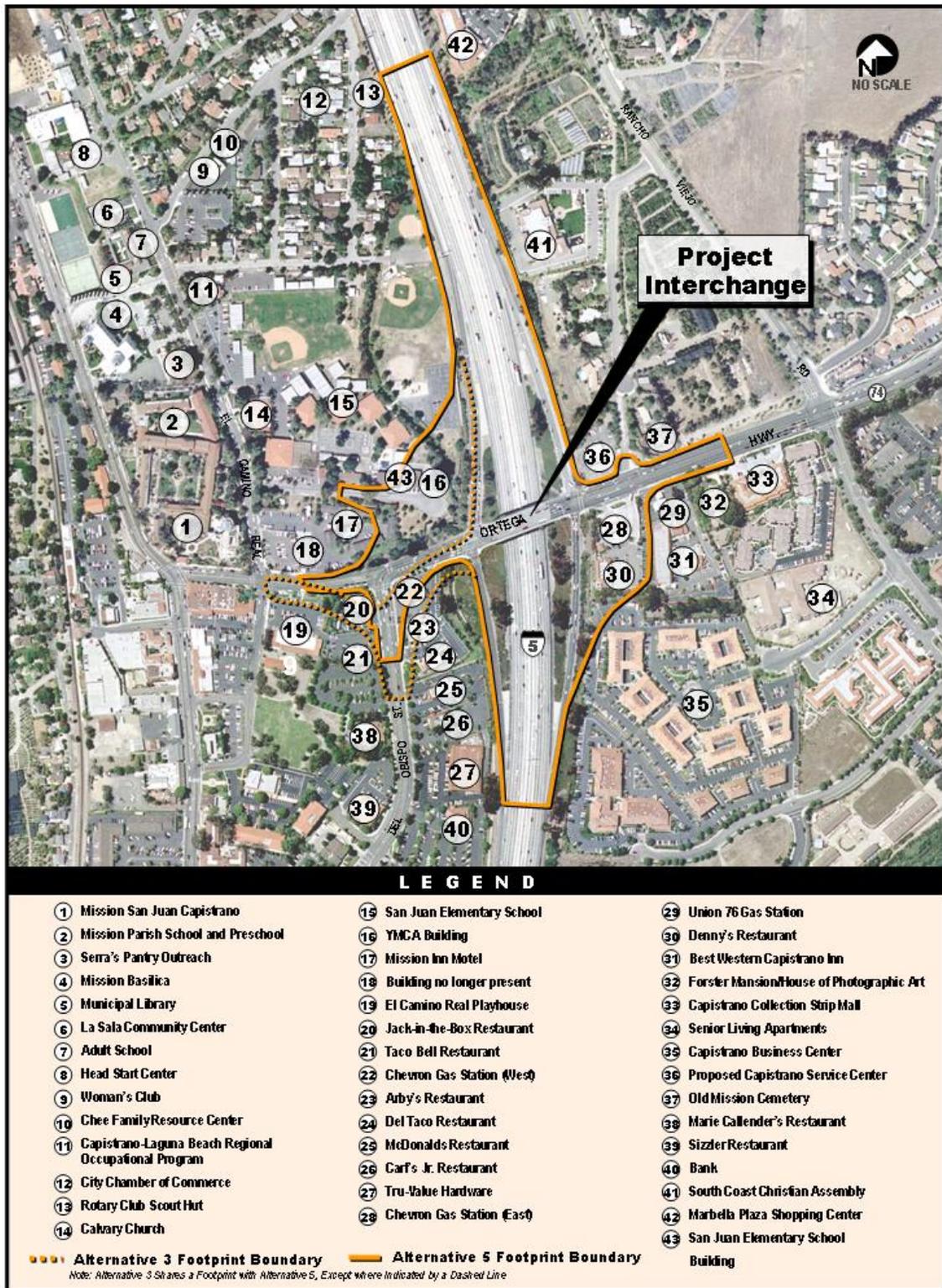
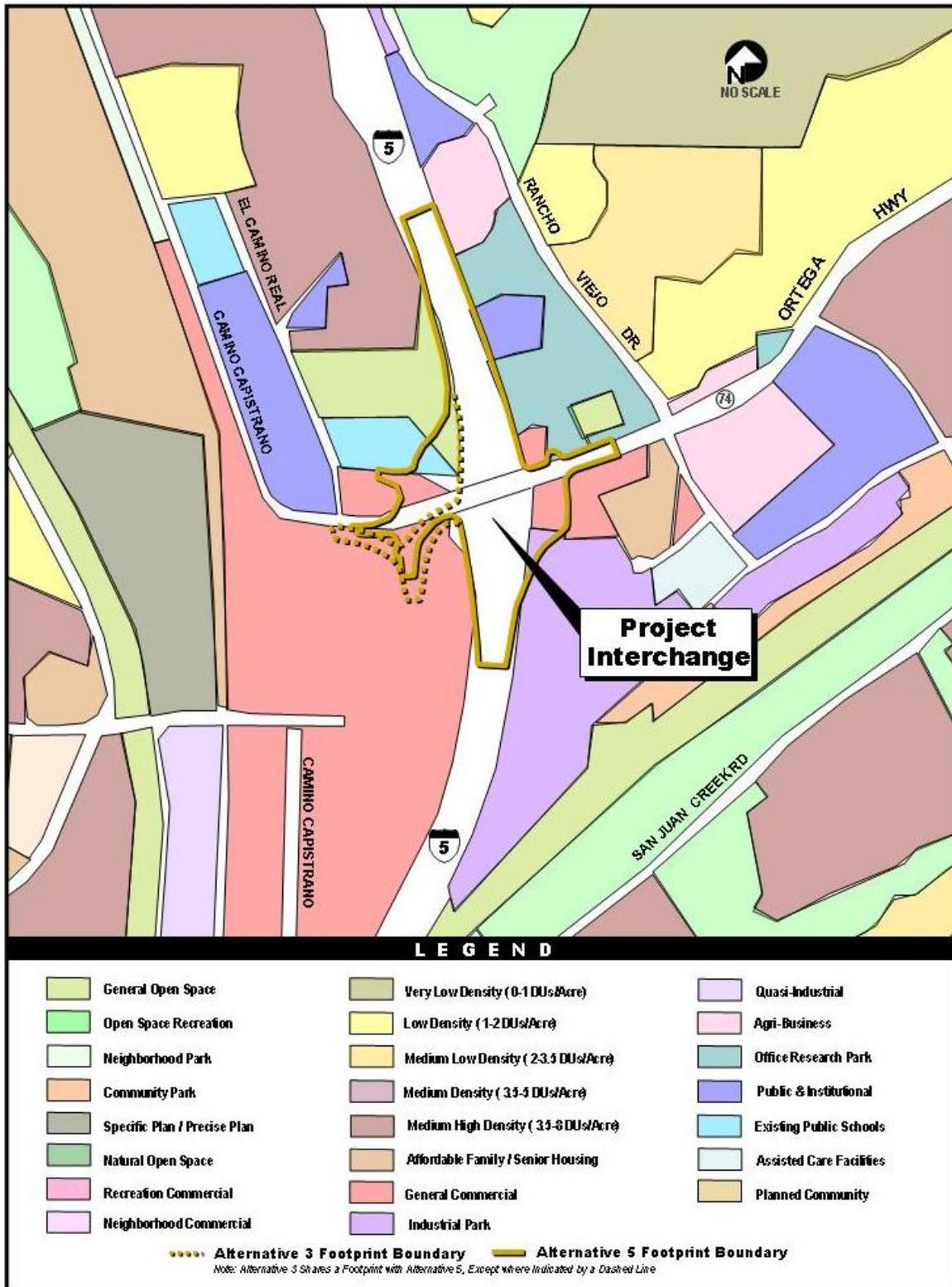


Figure 2.1.1-2
Project Area Buildings and Landmarks

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Source: Adapted fourth 2007 City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Land Use Map

Figure 2.1.1-3
 Project Area Land Uses

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Land Uses Southwest of the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange

The area southwest of the interchange and immediately south and east of downtown is predominantly comprised of strip commercial uses. Fast-food establishments, a gasoline service station, and the Camino Real Playhouse are located along the southern stretch of Ortega Highway within the project site. A County firehouse surrounded by strip commercial uses is located along Del Obispo Street southwest of the existing interchange. The City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan land use and zoning designate this area as *General Commercial and Specific Plan/Precise Plan*; and zoned *GC (General Commercial)*, *TG (Tourist Commercial District)*, and *CP (Community Park)*.

Land Uses Northeast of the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange

The land uses east of I-5 are described as commercial and business park. The parcel located adjacent to I-5 on the north side of Ortega Highway is under construction to be developed into a gasoline service station, market, and car wash called “Capistrano Service Center” (Duport, 2007). This parcel is designated General Commercial and is zoned *GC (General Commercial)*. To the immediate east, a vacant strip containing walls bordering the Old Mission Cemetery is found on the north side of Ortega Highway. This property is designated *General Open Space* and zoned *GOS (General Open Space)*. Proposed widening of Ortega Highway under both Alternatives 3 and 5 would occur along the southern boundary of these properties, and it would not occur on *Office/Research Park* uses located further east and north shown in the land use designation map.

Land Uses Southeast of the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange

Commercial uses dominate the south side of Ortega Highway in the project area. A Chevron gasoline service station and Denny’s restaurant on the south side of Ortega Highway are located within the proposed footprint of both Alternatives 3 and 5. A small portion of the adjacent parking lot of a hotel, the Capistrano Inn, is also located within the proposed project footprints. The historic Foster Mansion, which houses the House of Photographic Art is located further east along the south side of Ortega Highway, of which a narrow strip of the front lawn falls within the footprint for both Alternatives 3 and 5. Strip malls, business parks, and a high-density senior living complex are located further south of Ortega Highway. Figures 2.1.1-1 and 2.1.1-3 show the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan land use and zoning designations of this area as *General Commercial*, *Affordable Family/Senior Housing* and *Industrial Park*; and zoned *GC (General Commercial)* and *PC (Planned Community District)*, respectively.

Table 2.1.1-1 provides a summary of the land use designations located within approximately 0.25 mile (0.4 kilometer [km]) of the project interchange.

**Table 2.1.1-1
Land Use Designations in Project Vicinity (0.25 mile [0.4 km])**

Major Land Use Groupings	Land Use Designation and Summary Description
Open Space & Recreation	1.4 General Open Space – An individual use or combination of uses listed in other open space or recreation designations. Site-specific uses are determined during review of development applications.
Residential	2.4 Medium-High Density – Single-family dwellings, mobile home parks, duplexes, and multifamily dwellings, including condominiums, townhomes, and apartments. Allows up to 18 dwelling units per gross acre. 2.6 Affordable Family/Senior Housing – Affordable multifamily dwellings for families and seniors, including condominiums, apartments, and cooperatives. Allows up to 25 dwelling units per gross acre.
Commercial	3.1 General Commercial – Retail, office, and service-oriented business activities serving a communitywide area and population or broader market.
Industrial	4.0 Industrial Park – Light industrial and manufacturing uses. Allowable uses include wholesale businesses, light manufacturing and assembly, research and development, warehousing and storage, and distribution and sales. 4.4 Office/Research Park – Single- and multitenant offices, including legal, medical, financial, administrative, research and development, corporate, and general business.
Public/ Institutional	5.0 Public and Institutional – Schools, churches, fire stations, community centers, utility substations, and office complexes. 5.1 Existing Public Schools – Existing public schools.

Source: City of San Juan Capistrano, 2002.

Table 2.1.1-2 provides a summary of the zoning designations located within approximately 0.25 mile (0.4 km) of the project interchange.

**Table 2.1.1-2
Zoning Districts in Project Vicinity (0.25 mile [0.4 km])**

Zoning Category	Zoning District	Description
Commercial	GC	General Commercial District
	TC	Tourist Commercial District
Public and Institutional	P&I	Public and Institutional District
Open Space	GOS	General Open Space District
	CP	Community Park
Residential	MRD	Mission Residential District
Planned Community Districts	PC	Planned Community District

Source: City of San Juan Capistrano, 2002.

B Future Land Use

Development of commercial and light industrial uses along Ortega Highway serve the local and regional populations, with most of this development occurring adjacent to the project interchange and east of I-5. The City, as well as the surrounding region, has experienced substantial growth over the last 25 years. Unlike the past 25 years when

planning for the City's future focused on the expansion and control of growth, much of the City is now developed and the focus of planning has evolved toward managing and enhancing existing development (City of San Juan Capistrano, 2002). Primarily a residential community, the City is faced with challenges to ensure that enough commercial and industrial uses are present to support the needs of the community, while the rural-village character of the City remains intact. The City has strived to preserve the downtown historic commercial district and surrounding residential neighborhoods intact, and locate strip retail and industrial development outside of the downtown area (City of San Juan Capistrano, 2002); therefore, most new development is occurring outside the downtown area. This development trend is evident at the project interchange; with the exception of a hotel redevelopment project in the downtown area, all other planned development in the project area is located east of I-5 outside of the downtown core.

As previously described, two planned projects are located along Ortega Highway partially within the proposed Alternative 3 and 5 footprints, including the Capistrano Service Center located just northeast of the project interchange and the hotel redevelopment project planned just northwest of the project interchange. Additionally, office uses, an animal hospital, and expansion of an existing private school are projects planned near the proposed project. All of these are located east of I-5 and outside the proposed project alternative footprints. According to the City of San Juan Capistrano Economic Development Department, no other major development is planned at this time within the City downtown or within 0.5 mile of the project interchange (Duport, 2007).

C Parks and Recreation

There are no public parks or recreational facilities, including equestrian trails, recreational bikeways, or other recreational trails, located within the project footprint or that would have permanent effects because of the project.

2.1.1.4 Environmental Consequences

A Temporary Impacts

No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not result in construction activities; therefore, it would not result in any temporary land use adverse effects during construction.

Alternatives 3 and 5. Alternatives 3 and 5 would result in construction activities. During project construction, Alternatives 3 and 5 have the potential for short-term traffic, air quality, noise, and facility impacts that could conflict with the operation of commercial land uses and the San Juan Elementary School, including the use of ball fields and/or the YMCA building located on the school campus. These impacts and associated mitigation do not constitute temporary land use effects since they would not require a change in land use or zoning designations and plans. These are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.1.2, Community Impacts; Section 2.1.4, Traffic and Transportation; Section 2.2.6, Air Quality; and Section 2.2.7, Noise and Vibration.

A temporary disruption in commercial and school operations could occur during construction of proposed replacement facilities, as discussed in Section 2.1.2, Community

Impacts. Temporary closure of existing uses would result in a temporary change in existing land use since these facilities would not be in operation, or they would be in limited operation throughout the construction period; however, this change in existing uses during project construction would be temporary and would not conflict with established land use plans, affect adjacent uses, or divide an established community.

There would be no adverse land use effects associated with project construction since construction of the proposed project would not conflict with existing land use plans or require changes in land use designations.

B Permanent Impacts

No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not result in reconfiguration of the project interchange; therefore, it would not result in beneficial safety and circulation effects to the interchange and project area to be consistent with Policy 4.3 of the circulation element in the San Juan Capistrano General Plan.

The No Build Alternative would not improve congestion and would not meet the mobility needs of the community. The No Build Alternative would not be consistent with Circulation Goal 1 and Policy 1.5 of the circulation element in the San Juan Capistrano General Plan, as well as the public improvement objective in the Capistrano Central Redevelopment Project Plan.

The No Build Alternative would also not meet the objectives of the City and OCTA mobility improvement goals and would not be consistent with the SR-74 and I-5 RCR recommendations for improved traffic capacity at the I-5/SR-74 interchange.

Alternatives 3 and 5. Alternatives 3 and 5 would not be in conflict with existing City land use and zoning designations, and they would not require general plan amendments or zone changes (Ramsey, 2007). The proposed build alternatives would not conflict with planned development projects on affected properties, with the exception of preliminary plans for redevelopment of the Mission Inn Motel and adjacent vacant parcels into a hotel. Preliminary plans for this project may require revision to accommodate Alternative 5; however, Alternative 5 would not require elimination or major modification of plans for the hotel since the plans are preliminary and have not yet been submitted to the City for review (Duport, 2007). The hotel project proponent is aware of the proposed I-5/Ortega Highway interchange improvement project and would plan the hotel redevelopment in conjunction with the City to accommodate both projects (Duport, 2007); therefore, the proposed project is not expected to adversely affect the planned hotel redevelopment project. The proposed project would not disrupt any other planned development discussed in Section 2.1.1.2, and it would support these projects by better accommodating traffic flow associated with them. The proposed project would not conflict with the City's Historic Town Master Plan or Central Redevelopment Project Plan, and it would enhance circulation in these plan areas.

Alternatives 3 and 5 are consistent with the recommendations of the Caltrans 1986 RCR concept for SR-74, and with OCTA's and SCAG's growth and circulation regional plans described in Section 2.1.1.3.

Alternatives 3 and 5 involve acquisition of property to accommodate a reconfigured interchange. Both build alternatives propose a widened portion of Ortega Highway, which would result in full and partial property acquisition of commercial properties to accommodate a widened right-of-way (ROW) along the highway. As discussed in greater detail in Section 2.1.2, Community Impacts, these property acquisitions along Ortega Highway may include the displacement of commercial buildings. Other proposed ROW acquisitions along Ortega Highway would be minor. None of the proposed property acquisitions along Ortega Highway would result in the need for a change in land use designation or zoning. Remainder parcels would be large enough to accommodate continued commercial uses; therefore, no permanent, substantial effects to existing land use would result along Ortega Highway.

Alternative 5 would require substantial property acquisition of the San Juan Elementary School and Mission Inn Motel. The property acquisitions and replacements required under Alternative 5 are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.1.2, Community Impacts, which includes graphic depictions of the project area and potential areas of acquisition. These proposed property acquisitions are not anticipated to result in changes in existing or planned land use for these properties. As discussed in Section 2.1.2, Community Impacts, the proposed partial property acquisition of San Juan Elementary School would not require relocation of the school, and it would not require changes in land use designations and zoning of the school property. Acquisition of ROW for public street improvements is not regulated under the General Plan Land Use Element or under the provisions of Title 9, Land Use Code and the Official Zoning Map. Title 9 of the Land Use Code does not expressly include “public streets/ROW” in the list of uses; thus, it does not regulate public ROW as a land use. Rather, public streets and freeway interchanges serve as important infrastructure, similar to water, sewer, and drainage, which support land uses (Ramsey, 2007). From a general plan perspective, ROW acquisition and street improvements are governed by the provisions of the General Plan Circulation Element, which recognizes that future traffic volumes and highway capacity needs are directly related to future land use, and it includes reconstruction of the project interchange in the “Long-Range Roadway Improvements” for the City; thus, the project build alternatives are consistent with the City’s General Plan Circulation Element.

Except for the limited number of projects discussed above, the proposed project would not disrupt or cause any changes to existing plans, specific plans, or other planned development within the City, and it would not conflict with applicable regional plans. The proposed transportation project is intended to meet the existing and/or projected traffic demand based upon the local and regional land use plans; therefore, Alternatives 3 and 5 would not result in substantial adverse land use effects.

2.1.1.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

A Temporary Measures

Mitigation is not required.

B Permanent Measures

Mitigation is not required.