

Appendix K
Responses to Comments Received
During Draft EIR/EA Public Review
Period

Appendix K
I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project
Responses to Comments Received During Draft EIR/EA Public Review Period

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CUSD	1	The Capistrano Unified School District's (CUSD's) support of Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA).
CUSD	2	CUSD's opposition of Alternative 5 is noted.
CUSD	3	The term "community facility uses" is used in various places in the EIR/EA and is a land use description commonly used to describe public use and/or service developments including schools, parks, libraries, police stations, and other such public facilities. In response to CUSD's request, a specific reference to San Juan Elementary School has been added to the Final EIR/EA on the first page of the Summary section (in the first paragraph under the subheading "Overview of the Project Area") and in the first paragraph in Section 1.1.1 (Project Setting).
CUSD	4	<p>The year 2030 traffic volume for the Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway interchange is projected to be 121,000 vehicles per day (vpd) with and without implementation of the proposed interchange improvements. The proposed interchange improvements are intended to reduce related traffic congestion levels and improve existing operational deficiencies at the interchange that would otherwise be worsened in the future (as a result of increased traffic volumes) if the interchange improvements are not implemented. Sections 2.2.6 (Air Quality), 2.2.7 (Noise), and 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the EIR/EA provide analyses of air quality, noise, and traffic conditions with and without the proposed project.</p> <p>Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the EIR/EA concludes that all temporary air quality impacts associated with emissions of criteria air pollutants and asbestos would not have the potential to result in adverse effects. In regards to long-term (operational) air quality impacts, Section</p>

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		<p>2.2.6 of the EIR/EA concludes that the proposed project is not expected to result in localized CO, PM₁₀, or PM_{2.5} hot spots and the project is not expected to result in an adverse effect related to local air quality.</p> <p>Section 2.2.7 (Noise) of the EIR/EA concludes that temporary adverse effects related to construction noise are not anticipated and measures MM N-1 and MM N-2 are proposed to minimize construction noise. In regards to long-term (operational) noise impacts, Section 2.2.7 and Section 3.2.11 (Noise) of the EIR/EA state that under Alternative 3, sensitive noise receptors R2, R3, and R11 (representing a baseball field at San Juan Elementary School) would be subjected to noise levels that approach or exceed the required Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC). However, the predicted future noise levels at these receptor sites would be the same under the No Build Alternative (without project) and Alternative 3 (with proposed project). Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant long-term noise impact under CEQA guidelines and no long-term adverse noise effects under NEPA guidelines.</p> <p>Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the EIR/EA concludes that the project would not result in temporary adverse traffic and circulation effects. Measures MM TC-1 and MM TC-2 are proposed to avoid and minimize construction-related traffic and circulation impacts of the project. In regards to long-term (operational) traffic impacts, Section 2.1.4 of the EIR/EA concludes that the intersection and ramp traffic performance for Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative) and Alternative 5 show adequate levels of service (LOS) and demonstrate that these proposed alternatives meet all of the specified minimum performance criteria in year 2030. Section 2.1.4 of the EIR/EA concludes that under the No Build Alternative, the actual traffic delays in year 2030 that would be experienced in the</p>

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		project study area would all be equivalent to unacceptable LOS F conditions due to traffic operational problems resulting from the closely spaced intersections (i.e., traffic queue blockage between intersections).
CUSD	5	<p>The comment does not specify which type(s) of potential indirect impacts related to raising the Ortega Highway bridge profile are of concern to CUSD. Sections 2.1.5 (Visual/Aesthetics) and 2.2.7 (Noise) of the EIR/EA provide analyses of visual and noise conditions that would have potential to indirectly affect offsite areas, including the San Juan Elementary School. The analyses presented in the EIR/EA were completed based upon the proposed design for the replacement Ortega Highway Bridge. The project description for the proposed Ortega Highway bridge replacement is described in Section 1.4.2.2 (Unique Features of the Build Alternatives) of the EIR/EA, which states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The Ortega Highway/I-5 freeway overcrossing would be replaced to allow for additional full-width standard lanes (8 total) on the I-5 freeway, as well as a longer span length to provide additional space underneath to accommodate the proposed northbound loop on-ramp and for possible future widening of the I-5 freeway. The increased span length would result in a deeper bridge section, thus requiring the bridge profile to be raised to maintain the minimum required vertical clearance.”</p> <p>The project description and preliminary design plans for the replacement Ortega Highway bridge document that it would have a raised profile. As such, the visual and noise analyses presented in the EIR/EA predict future “with project” conditions that are representative of the project area with the raised profile of the reconstructed Ortega Highway bridge in place. The EIR/EA discloses the potential indirect impacts of the proposed project, which includes the</p>

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		raised profile of the reconstructed Ortega Highway bridge. The visual and noise analyses presented in the EIR/EA conclude that with incorporation of recommended minimization and mitigation measures, the project would not result in substantial effects under NEPA or significant impacts under CEQA.
CUSD	6	An analysis of potential impacts related to the proposed future I-5 freeway widening (separate project) through the San Juan Capistrano area is beyond the scope of this EIR/EA, as the proposed future widening of I-5 would be a separate and unrelated project. Preliminary design plans have not yet been developed for the proposed future I-5 widening, as the project scoping and concept design phase for the proposed I-5 widening will not be started for several years. As such, it is unknown at this time if any property impacts at the San Juan Elementary School site would occur as a result of the proposed future I-5 widening and to comment on this subject would be purely speculative. In the future when the proposed I-5 widening is advanced through the formal planning and design process, a separate environmental document will be prepared to fully analyze and disclose the potential impacts of the proposed I-5 widening.
CUSD	7	CUSD's opposition of Alternative 5 is noted. Sections 2.2.6 (Air Quality) and 2.2.7 (Noise) of the EIR/EA provide analyses of potential air quality and noise effects that would result if Alternative 5 were implemented.
CUSD	8	The California Department of Transportation (Department) acknowledges CUSD's comment regarding the lack of suitable land in the project vicinity where a new school could be relocated to. The EIR/EA indicates that if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation and acquisition of land from the San Juan Elementary School site is necessary, then it is anticipated that the existing San Juan Elementary School could be redesigned and reconfigured (including covering over Horno Creek to gain back usable land on the school site) to allow for continued operation of the school in its current location. If Alternative 5 is selected for implementation,

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		<p>then the required temporary and permanent modifications at the San Juan Elementary School site would require further professional study, development of architectural plans, and development of a strategy for temporary school facilities and procedures to minimize construction-related impacts upon school operations. This would all be carried out under the direction of CUSD with assistance and financial compensation provided by the Department and the City. Please note that Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIR/EA, primarily to avoid construction-related and physical impacts to the San Juan Elementary School site.</p> <p>The EIR/EA includes mitigation measure MM COM-2 which specifies that applicable federal, state, and local government property acquisition programs shall be followed to provide compensation and relocation assistance to owners of affected properties where acquisitions are required. MM COM-2 also states that additional Department and/or City assistance shall be provided, if applicable. The provisions of MM COM-2 would be followed to provide compensation and assistance with temporary and permanent replacement facility strategies to CUSD if Alternative 5 is implemented. However, it must be reiterated that the project alternatives evaluated in the EIR/EA do not include plans or requirements for the relocation of San Juan Elementary School to a different site and the complete relocation of the school to an offsite location is not anticipated.</p> <p>In response to CUSD's inquiry about the existing and proposed soundwall adjacent to the I-5 southbound off-ramp, please note that although the existing soundwall is 16-feet tall, it is currently located on the I-5 freeway right-of-way (ROW) boundary line where the topography is lower in elevation than the current I-5 southbound off-ramp and surrounding area. Due to the</p>

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		<p>low-lying elevation where the current soundwall is positioned, the effective “net height” of the existing soundwall is substantially less than 16 feet. Under Alternative 5, a portion of the existing 16-foot soundwall at this location would remain and a portion of the soundwall would need to be removed and replaced. If Alternative 5 is implemented, the proposed replacement section of the soundwall would be constructed at a proposed 10-foot height long the reconfigured I-5 southbound loop off-ramp shoulder, where the topography would be higher in elevation than the location of the remaining 16-foot soundwall section. Due to the fact that the replacement 10-foot soundwall section would be built on the I-5 southbound off-ramp shoulder (and not on the ROW boundary line) and not situated in a low-lying area, the replacement soundwall section would not need to be as tall as the current 16-foot soundwall section to achieve the same degree of effectiveness in noise reduction.</p> <p>The noise study conducted for the project and summarized in Section 2.2.7 (Noise) of the EIR/EA demonstrates that the replacement 10-ft soundwall section proposed under Alternative 5 would effectively reduce noise levels at the San Juan Elementary School site such that future noise levels at the school with Alternative 5 in place would be less than or equal to noise levels under the Future No-Build condition (if the project is not constructed and the existing 16-foot soundwall is left as is), with the exception of one noise receptor location (receptor R9, representing the sports field adjacent to the existing I-5 southbound off-ramp). At receptor R9, the noise analysis results predict that the future noise level would be 65 dBA under the Future No-Build condition and 66 dBA under the Future Build condition (with implementation of Alternative 5 and the proposed 10-foot soundwall replacement section required by mitigation measure N-3). With the required soundwall in place, the 1 dBA noise increase attributable to Alternative 5 does not constitute an adverse effect under NEPA or a significant impact under</p>

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		the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Refer to Table 2.2.7-10 in Section 2.2.7 (Noise) of the EIR/EA for a summary of the noise analysis results of Alternative 5. In summary, the analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that the required noise abatement under Alternative 5 (per mitigation measure MM N-3) would adequately reduce noise to acceptable levels at the school, playground, and baseball field in accordance with CEQA mitigation requirements and Department noise abatement standards.
CUSD	9	<p>Thorough air quality and noise analyses were completed for this project and summarized in the EIR/EA. The EIR/EA concludes that, after mitigation, there would be less than significant impacts under CEQA and minor effects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) upon sensitive receptors of air quality and noise in the project area, including the San Juan Elementary School site. Refer to Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality), Section 2.2.7 (Noise), and Tables ES 3 and 4 (Summary of Temporary and Permanent Impacts) of the EIR/EA for more information.</p> <p>The noise analysis presented in Table 2.2.7-9 in Section 2.2.7 (Noise) of the EIR/EA demonstrates that with implementation of Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative), the future noise levels at San Juan Elementary School would be the same under the Future No-Build condition and the Future Build condition (with implementation of Alternative 3 and the existing 16-foot soundwall along the I-5 southbound off-ramp left in place), with the exception of noise receptor location R7 on the school site. At receptor R7, the noise analysis results predict that the future noise level would be 61 dBA under the Future No-Build condition and 62 dBA under the Future Build condition under Alternative 3. The predicted future noise level of 62 dBA at receptor location R7 under Alternative 3 does not constitute an adverse effect under NEPA or a significant impact under CEQA.</p>

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		<p>Refer to response to comment CUSD-8 for a description of future noise effects at San Juan Elementary School under Alternative 5. Under Alternative 5, the predicted 66 dBA noise level at receptor R9 under the Future Build condition (with implementation of Alternative 5 and the proposed 10-foot soundwall replacement section required by mitigation measure MM N-3) does not constitute an adverse effect under NEPA or a significant impact under CEQA.</p> <p>The air quality analysis conducted for the project and summarized in Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) and Table ES-4 of the EIR/EA concludes that the proposed build Alternatives 3 and 5 would have an overall beneficial effect upon air quality in comparison to the No Build Alternative. This conclusion is based upon the fact that Alternatives 3 and 5 would reduce traffic congestion at the interchange, which would provide a reduction in stationary idling vehicles that produce elevated pollutant emission concentrations at the interchange. The air quality analysis concludes that Alternatives 3 and 5 would not result in localized carbon monoxide (CO) or particulate matter (PM) concentrations. In addition, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Transportation Conformity Working Group (TCWG) determined that the proposed project conforms to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality conformity and that the project is not a project of air quality concern. The EIR/EA concludes that in the future, under the No Build alternative (no improvements implemented), the interchange would operate at traffic level of service (LOS) E and F conditions during peak traffic hours; therefore, a deterioration in air quality in the project area is expected under the No Build Alternative.</p> <p>Based upon the analyses and conclusions, the Department has determined that an EA and</p>

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		Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is the appropriate level of environmental analysis to comply with NEPA.
CUSD	10	<p>CUSD's opposition to Alternative 5 is noted. Please note that Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIR/EA, primarily to avoid physical impacts to the San Juan Elementary School site.</p> <p>It must also be noted that simply because a project alternative requires acquisition of property for conversion to transportation use, it does not mean that the project would be inconsistent with existing and planned local development. The <i>City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i> calls for improvements at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange and it is recognized that implementation of the interchange improvements would require acquisition and conversion of existing offsite uses to transportation use. The proposed interchange improvements would be located in the immediate vicinity of existing major highway uses and would not introduce a new land use type to the project area that is not already present.</p> <p>As discussed above, the EIR/EA indicates that if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation and acquisition of land from the San Juan Elementary School site is necessary, then it is anticipated that the existing San Juan Elementary School could be redesigned and reconfigured (including covering over Horno Creek to gain back usable land on the school site) to allow for continued operation of the school in its current location. This is an issue that would require further professional study and development of architectural plans if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation.</p>
CUSD	11	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
CUSD	12	Under Alternative 3, the preliminary design plans indicate that the proposed reconfigured I-5

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		southbound off-ramp would accommodate four 12' lanes with a 10' right shoulder and a 4' left shoulder (for a total width of 62') at its widest point. All proposed improvements to the I-5 southbound off-ramp would be constructed within the Department's existing ROW boundary line. The existing soundwall protecting the San Juan Elementary School would remain in place and would not require modification under Alternative 3.
CUSD	13	<p>Refer to response to comment CUSD-8 for a discussion of the lower "net height" of the existing 16-foot soundwall along the I-5 southbound off-ramp due to its current placement in a low-lying area and a description of future noise effects at San Juan Elementary School under Alternative 5. In addition, please refer to the sentence in third paragraph on page 2.2.7-15 of the Final EIR/EA, which states: "The proposed placement along the ramp shoulder for soundwall S523 would be more effective to minimize noise and also shield the line of sight from heavy-duty truck exhaust stacks." This statement is also reiterated in the notes to Table 2.2.7-10 in the EIR/EA, which indicate that the proposed 10-foot height of the soundwall replacement section under Alternative 5 is "required to cut the line-of-sight to heavy truck stacks."</p> <p>Note: in traffic noise analysis methodology, line-of-sight is a term used to describe conditions where a sensitive noise receptor is directly exposed to a traffic noise source, with no barrier between the traffic noise source and the sensitive noise receptor. In the case of the proposed 10-foot height recommended for soundwall S523 (under Alternative 5), the EIR/EA analysis suggests that a wall of at least 10 feet in height would be required at this location (If Alternative 5 is implemented) to ensure that the portion of San Juan Elementary School that the wall would protect would not be directly exposed to the traffic noise source on I-5 southbound off-ramp.</p>

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CUSD	14	CUSD’s opposition of Alternative 5 is noted. Please note that Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIR/EA, primarily to avoid physical impacts to the San Juan Elementary School site.
CUSD	15	Refer to response to comment CUSD-14.
CUSD	16	<p>The proposed interchange improvements would increase traffic carrying capacity within the immediate interchange area and there is no statement to the contrary in the EIR/EA. An increase in traffic carrying capacity within the interchange is, in fact, required to achieve the desired reduction in traffic congestion. Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) provides a detailed analysis of predicted future traffic conditions with and without implementation of the project.</p> <p>The referenced discussion on pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EIR/EA states that the project “does not represent an ‘expansion of capacity’ to the portions of Ortega Highway or the I-5 freeway beyond the immediate interchange area.” The discussion on pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EIR/EA specifically addresses the potential of the project to generate or accommodate new offsite development or induce additional traffic or development growth that are not otherwise expected to occur under currently adopted development plans or forecasts made by regional planning agencies. The conclusion is that the project, in and of itself, does not have the potential to directly or indirectly induce new offsite land development or population growth.</p> <p>In addition, Section 2.1.1.3 B (Future Land Use) of the EIR/EA states that “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.” This section of the EIR/EA also states that “...most new</p>

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		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.” Section 2.1.1.4 B (Land Use, Environmental Consequences, Permanent Impacts) of the EIR/EA concludes that “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.”
CUSD	17	<p>Under Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative), no property acquisition affecting the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) building or any portion of San Juan Elementary School would be required.</p> <p>If Alternative 5 is implemented, then the YMCA building on the San Juan Elementary School site would require relocation. Federal guidelines define a Section 4(f) recreation site as land from a significant publicly owned public park or recreation area. The Section 4(f) criteria state that the recreation site must be open for general use by the public. Due to the fact that the YMCA is a private organization and payment is required for use of YMCA facilities, the YMCA building does not meet the definition of a public recreation area under Section 4(f) guidelines. As such, a Section 4(f) analysis of effects to the YMCA facility is not warranted.</p> <p>In regards to the grassy portion of the San Juan Elementary School open space area and the portion of the school’s playground blacktop area that would require acquisition under</p>

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		<p>Alternative 5, pages 2-3 and 2-4 of the EIR/EA provide adequate discussion of the rationale used to determine that these areas do not meet the definition of a public recreation area under Section 4(f) criteria. The discussion notes that Alternative 5 would <u>not</u> require property acquisition of any of the school's formally designated sports field areas (i.e., baseball/softball and soccer fields). The discussion also states that San Juan Elementary School site is, in fact, a closed campus and not open to informal or "walk-on" use by the public. Any informal use by the public of the school's facilities is not officially permitted by the school administration. These statements were confirmed by direct correspondence with the Principal of San Juan Elementary School. As such, the portions of the San Juan Elementary School that would be directly affected by property acquisition under Alternative 5 do not require a Section 4(f) analysis.</p> <p>Refer to responses to comments CUSD-8 and CUSD-9 for a discussion regarding indirect air quality and noise impacts upon the school that would result from the No Build Alternative and Alternatives 3 and 5. In addition, refer to Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA for a discussion of the direct effects to San Juan Elementary School site that would result from the property acquisition at the school required under Alternative 5.</p>
CUSD	18	Refer to response to comment CUSD-17 regarding treatment of the YMCA building under Section 4(f) guidelines.
CUSD	19	<p>The YMCA is a private organization and payment is required for use of YMCA facilities; therefore, the YMCA building does not meet the definition of a public recreation area.</p> <p>Refer to responses to comments CUSD-8 and CUSD-9 for a discussion regarding indirect air quality and noise impacts upon the school that would result from the No Build Alternative and</p>

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		Alternatives 3 and 5. In addition, refer to Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA for a discussion of the direct effects to the San Juan Elementary School site that would result from the property acquisition at the school required under Alternative 5.
CUSD	20	<p>Refer to response to comment CUSD-10 regarding the project's compatibility with established land use plans.</p> <p>The EIR/EA discloses that disruption at the San Juan Elementary School site would occur during project construction. The temporary air quality effects associated with project construction activities are anticipated to be minor impacts under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA with implementation of minimization measures MM AQ-1 and MM AQ-2 as specified in the EIR/EA. The EIR/EA discloses that operation of construction equipment and construction activities would produce noise increases, but distances of separation to sensitive receptors are sufficient to attenuate most increases. Under Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative), the existing 16-foot soundwall along the I-5 southbound off-ramp would serve to minimize construction-related noise affecting the San Juan Elementary School.</p> <p>The EIR/EA includes minimization measures MM N-1 and MM N-2 which require the project to comply with City of San Juan Capistrano noise ordinance provisions related to construction noise and to ensure that all construction equipment is equipped with mufflers. In addition, the EIR/EA includes revised minimization measure MM COM-1 which stipulates that the City and/or Department will conduct outreach with affected areas residents, businesses, and CUSD regarding construction schedules and potential temporary inconveniences during construction. In accordance with CUSD's request, the text of MM COM-1 has been revised in the Final EIR/EA to include specific reference to CUSD. The intent of this minimization measure is to</p>

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		require advance coordination between City and/or Department staff and residents/businesses/CUSD so that the project's construction activities may be planned and scheduled in a manner that would reduce construction-related impacts upon adjacent areas to the maximum extent possible. As part of the outreach and coordination required under MM COM-1, it is anticipated that discussions with CUSD would occur to ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, the noisiest construction activities could be scheduled at times that would be least disruptive to activities at the San Juan Elementary School.
CUSD	21	Refer to response to comments CUSD-10 (second paragraph), CUSD-16 (third paragraph), and CUSD-20.
CUSD	22	<p>CUSD's opposition of Alternative 5 is noted. Please note that Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIR/EA, primarily to avoid physical impacts to the San Juan Elementary School site. Refer to response to comment CUSD-8 regarding the potential for reconfiguration and continued operation of the San Juan Elementary School at its current location if Alternative 5 is implemented.</p> <p>The EIR/EA states on pages 2.1.1-14 and 2.1.1-15 that implementation of Alternatives 3 and 5 would not require general plan amendments or zone changes in the project area. This information is correct and was confirmed with the City of San Juan Capistrano Planning Department (Ramsey, 2007). According to City staff, transportation easements would be designated on portions of the property parcels that would be acquired to accommodate the project and the designation of transportation easements would not require formal amendments to the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan or Zoning Map.</p>
CUSD	23	The EIR/EA includes minimization measure MM TC-1 which requires the development of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) prior to project construction, as well as measure MM TC-2

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		<p>which requires the preparation of a Construction Management Plan (CMP) prior to project construction. The TMP would include provisions to ensure safe access for vehicles and pedestrians to and from the San Juan Elementary School is maintained at all times during project construction. The CMP would include requirements that the construction contractor must comply with to minimize construction-related impacts on local transportation and circulation.</p> <p>In addition, the EIR/EA includes revised minimization measure MM COM-1 which stipulates that the City will conduct outreach with affected areas residents, businesses, and CUSD regarding construction schedules and potential temporary inconveniences during construction. In accordance with CUSD's request, the text of MM COM-1 has been revised in the Final EIR/EA to include specific reference to CUSD. The intent of this minimization measure is to require advance coordination between City staff and residents/businesses/CUSD so that the project's construction activities may be planned and scheduled in a manner that would to reduce construction-related impacts upon adjacent areas to the maximum extent possible. As part of the outreach and coordination required under MM COM-1, it is anticipated that discussions with CUSD would occur to incorporate recommendations from CUSD into the TMP and CMP.</p>
CUSD	24	<p>It is expressly confirmed and understood by the Department and the City that close coordination with CUSD will be required prior to and during the project construction period to minimize construction-related impacts and inconveniences at San Juan Elementary School. As part of the Department's Public Awareness Campaign and coordination required under revised minimization measure MM COM-1, it is anticipated that discussions with CUSD shall occur to incorporate recommendations from CUSD into the TMP and CMP. In accordance with CUSD's</p>

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		request, the text of MM COM-1 has been revised in the Final EIR/EA to include specific reference to CUSD. It should be noted by CUSD that the TMP and CMP could not actually be prepared without input from CUSD, as the purpose of the TMP and CMP are to minimize construction impacts caused by the project to the travelling public on the State Highway System and surrounding uses, including San Juan Elementary School. In addition to San Juan Elementary School, there are several additional existing uses in the project vicinity that would be similarly affected during the project construction period. MM COM-1 is intended to provide a requirement for coordination with all affected public and commercial uses, as well as the community at large, prior to and during project construction.
CUSD	25	For a discussion of potential impacts and minimization measures related to traffic, refer to Sections 2.1.4.3, 2.1.4.4, and 3.2.16 of the EIR/EA. For a discussion of potential impacts and minimization measures related to air quality, refer to Sections 2.2.6.3, 2.2.6.4, and 3.2.3 of the EIR/EA. For a discussion of potential impacts and minimization measures related to noise, refer to Sections 2.2.7.3, 2.2.7.4, and 3.2.11 of the EIR/EA.
CUSD	26	Refer to response to comment CUSD-25.
CUSD	27	It is recognized and noted in the EIR/EA that during construction, Alternative 5 would disrupt existing operations at San Juan Elementary School. Please note that Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIR/EA, primarily to avoid construction-related and permanent impacts to the San Juan Elementary School site. Refer to response to comment CUSD-8 regarding the planning coordination and additional studies that would be required to accommodate reconfiguration and continued operation of the San Juan Elementary School at its current location if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation.
CUSD	28	If Alternative 5 is selected for implementation, the development of temporary strategies and a permanent solution to accommodate operations at the San Juan Elementary School site would

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		need to occur. Development of such strategies (i.e., determining exactly how to minimize impacts) would require a detailed and comprehensive planning process to be carried out under the oversight of CUSD during the future design phase of the project. Refer to response to comment CUSD-8 regarding the planning coordination and additional studies that would be required to accommodate reconfiguration and continued operation of the San Juan Elementary School at its current location if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation.
CUSD	29	If Alternative 5 is selected for implementation and necessitate the removal of 23 parking spaces at San Juan Elementary School, then compensation and relocation assistance would be provided to CUSD to address the loss of parking spaces. Mitigation measure MM COM-2 is included in the EIR/EA to emphasize that federal, state, and local laws would be followed to provide compensation and relocation assistance to CUSD.
CUSD	30	The referenced discussion in Section 2.1.2.3 (Environmental Justice) in the EIR/EA includes a revised sentence which states, “For both build alternatives, see Section 2.2.7 for more information on noise impacts and soundwall implementation analysis.” For a discussion of potential impacts and minimization measures related to noise, including soundwall implementation analysis, refer specifically to Sections 2.2.7.3, 2.2.7.4, and 3.2.11 of the EIR/EA.
CUSD	31	The YMCA building is treated as part of the San Juan Elementary School site in the EIR/EA and all buildings/uses on the school site were treated as sensitive receptors in the air quality and noise analyses conducted for the EIR/EA. For a discussion of potential impacts and minimization measures related to air quality, refer to Sections 2.2.6.3, 2.2.6.4, and 3.2.3 of the EIR/EA. As part of the EIR/EA noise study, a noise measurement was taken specifically near the

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		YMCA building (identified as noise measurement site ST3) on the school site and noise modeling was completed to predict future noise levels at the YMCA building (identified as noise receiver number R5A) with and without the proposed build alternatives of the project. For a discussion of potential impacts and minimization measures related to noise, refer to Sections 2.2.7.3, 2.2.7.4, and 3.2.11 of the EIR/EA.
CUSD	32	Refer to response to comment CUSD-24.
CUSD	33	<p>The referenced discussion in Section 2.1.3.1, D (Recreation Facilities) does not identify the playground at San Juan Elementary School as a public recreation area. The first two sentences of the second paragraph under this heading in the EIR/EA read as follows: “Many parks and recreation facilities are located near the project. These facilities are listed in Table 2.1.3-2.” Table 2.1.3-2 (Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities in the Project Vicinity) of the EIR/EA includes only Buchheim Field with the following note regarding Buchheim Field: “This facility is owned by CUSD. There is a joint use agreement with the City.” Please note that no additional portions of the San Juan Elementary School site (e.g., playground area) are included in Table 2.1.3-2. The reason that Buchheim Field has been identified as a recreation area in this section of the EIR/EA is because there is a joint use agreement in place between the City and CUSD that allows for specific public uses (e.g., Little League) at Buchheim Field. The joint use agreement between CUSD and the City is limited only to Buchheim Field and does not facilitate public uses on other portions of the San Juan Elementary School site.</p> <p>The remaining discussion in the second paragraph under Section 2.1.3.1, D (Recreation Facilities) in the Draft EIR/EA included reference to the playground area at San Juan Elementary School just to note that the playground area would be directly affected by Alternative 5. The intent of this discussion in the Draft EIR/EA was to demonstrate that</p>

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		<p>Alternative 5 would not directly affect any of the identified recreation areas (i.e., the sites listed in Table 2.1.3-2). This text has been revised in the Final EIR/EA to clarify that the San Juan Elementary School’s playground area is not considered a recreation area for the purposes of analysis, while Buchheim Field on the school site is considered a recreation area. The EIR/EA notes that Buchheim Field does not fall within the Alternative 5 project footprint and would not be affected.</p> <p>Refer to response to comment CUSD-17 regarding treatment of the San Juan Elementary School site with respect to Section 4(f) analysis. Refer to responses to comments CUSD-8 and CUSD-9 for a discussion regarding indirect air quality and noise impacts upon the school that would result from the No Build Alternative and Alternatives 3 and 5. The EIR/EA clearly states that no direct impacts would occur at Buchheim Field under Alternatives 3 and 5. In addition, the air quality and noise analyses included in the EIR/EA demonstrate that Alternatives 3 and 5 would not cause adverse or significant indirect impacts at Buchheim Field. As such, the project would not result in a direct or constructive use (i.e., indirect use) of Buchheim Field that would require the preparation of a Section 4(f) analysis.</p>
CUSD	34	CUSD’s mention of the need for installation of adequate signage and barricades in the project area to keep students out of the construction area and ensure students to safely travel through the area during construction is noted. The Department agrees that such provisions will be required to ensure safety in the project area during construction. Refer to response to comment CUSD-24 in regards to CUSD’s request to review and comment on the TMP before it is finalized.
CUSD	35	In response to CUSD’s request, the text of minimization measure PS-3 has been revised in the Final EIR/EA to read as follows:

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		“MM PS-3: Area residents and owners/managers of businesses and public facilities must be continually informed of the project development and construction plans prior to and during the construction period so that they are aware of the construction timing, traffic detour plans, lane/road closures, and transit detour plans.”
CUSD	36	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
CUSD	37	The purpose of the TMP is to ensure adequate access and safety during construction. TMPs include requirements to keep all agencies and the community informed of detours and safety issues during construction periods. The Department will work closely with the City, CUSD, and other community entities prior to and during the construction period to communicate information effectively regarding traffic and pedestrian circulation in the project area. The EIR/EA also includes minimization measures MM PS-2 and MM PS-3 which require communication with emergency service providers, area residents, and owners/managers of businesses and public facilities prior to and during the construction period.
CUSD	38	Refer to responses to comments CUSD-23 and CUSD-24.
CUSD	39	Comment noted and no revision to the EIR/EA is necessary. Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative) would not require property acquisition or modification of any portion of the San Juan Elementary School site. Any future modifications to the San Juan Elementary School site would be carried out under CUSD’s authority and subject to independent environmental analysis with CUSD acting as the CEQA lead agency.
CUSD	40	Chapter 3 (CEQA Evaluation) of the EIR/EA provides an analysis of the project’s air quality impacts in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. The Department has not adopted any construction emissions significance thresholds of its

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		own, not has the Department endorsed or approved the use of any models or methodology to quantify construction emissions from other agencies. The Department has maintained a policy that the local air districts' CEQA thresholds of significance are not legally binding on any of the Department's transportation projects. The Department has not made any exception to this policy regarding the CEQA significance thresholds, and does not perceive a need to start an exception with the current project.
CUSD	41	Table 2.2.6-1 has been updated in Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the Final EIR/EA.
CUSD	42	Table 2.2.6-2 has been updated in Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the Final EIR/EA.
CUSD	43	Table 2.2.6-4 and corresponding discussion regarding the current carbon monoxide (CO) attainment status of the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB) has been updated in Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the Final EIR/EA.
CUSD	44	This text has been revised in Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the Final EIR/EA.
CUSD	45	Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the Final EIR/EA has been updated to reflect the latest Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) that was adopted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) on June 1, 2007.
CUSD	46	It is the policy of the California Department of Transportation (Department) that construction work performed by either the Department's staff or its contractors will fully comply with all construction-related rules and regulations of the local air district that have been legally adopted through a public review process. The Department has also maintained a policy that the local air districts' CEQA thresholds of significance are not legally binding on any of the Department's transportation projects. The Department has not made any exception to this policy regarding the CEQA thresholds, and does not perceive a need to start an exception with the current project.

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		<p>In accordance with Department's policy, a qualitative construction emissions analysis was conducted and summarized in the project's EIR/EA. The Department has not adopted any construction emission thresholds of its own, nor has the Department endorsed or approved the use of any models or methodology to quantify construction emissions from other agencies. As such, the air quality analysis prepared for the EIR/EA does not include a localized significance analysis (LSA) for on-site construction activities or otherwise quantify construction emissions using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model (RCEM) based on the SCAQMD model or any other model.</p> <p>Section 2.2.6.3, heading B (Air Quality, Environmental Consequences, Temporary Impacts) of the EIR/EA includes a qualitative discussion of the construction-related air emissions. A listing of the SCAQMD's construction-related rules for particulate matter (PM) and asbestos is included in the section for the reader's reference. The project's construction activities will fully comply with all such rules to minimize the emissions during the construction phase of the project. The EIR/EA includes minimization measures MM AQ-1 and MM AQ-2 that will be implemented to minimize construction-related pollutant emissions associated with the project.</p>
CUSD	47	Refer to response to comment CUSD-46.
CUSD	48	The discussion related to the Carbon Monoxide Hotspots Analysis has been clarified in the second paragraph of Section 2.2.6.3 C (Air Quality, Environmental Consequences, Permanent Impacts) of the Final EIR/EA.
CUSD	49	Refer to response to comment CUSD-48.
CUSD	50	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
CUSD	51	As noted in Table 2.2.7-9 of the EIR/EA, the traffic noise model results indicate that Alternative 3 would result in a nominal future noise increase of 1 dBA (as compared to the Future No Build

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		<p>condition) at receptor site R7 on the San Juan Elementary School grounds. This minimal noise increase at the school that would result from Alternative 3 is predicted as a result of the following two conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The existing soundwall along the I-5 southbound off-ramp would remain in place and continue to reduce noise levels at the school; and 2) Under Alternative 3, the traffic lanes on the I-5 southbound off-ramp (which are the predominant source of traffic noise audible at the school site) would not be moved significantly closer to the school. Under Alternative 3, the modifications to the I-5 southbound off-ramp would all take place within the existing Department right-of-way on the east side of the existing soundwall.
CUSD	52	A discussion regarding construction-related vibration impacts has been added to Section 2.2.7.3 A (Noise, Environmental Consequences, Temporary Impacts) and Section 3.2.11 (CEQA Evaluation, Noise) of the Final EIR/EA.
CUSD	53	Refer to the paragraph in response to comment CUSD-8 that discusses the “effective net height” of the existing soundwall and the proposed soundwall height/placement under Alternative 5.
CUSD	54	Refer to the discussion regarding construction noise in response to comment CUSD-20.
CUSD	55	<p>Refer to the discussion regarding construction noise in response to comment CUSD-20.</p> <p>If the proposed project is approved for implementation, then CUSD will be consulted during the future project design phase regarding the feasibility of additional measures to further minimize construction-related noise at San Juan Elementary School. As part of the future project design phase, a Final Noise Abatement Decision Report (NADR) will be prepared in accordance with</p>

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		Department procedures. The NADR will analyze and confirm the permanent noise abatement measures (i.e., soundwalls) to be constructed as part of the project.
DTSC	1	An Initial Site Assessment (ISA) was prepared for this project and Section 2.2.5 (Hazardous Waste/Materials) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental assessment (EIR/EA) includes an environmental setting discussion which summarizes the findings of the ISA. The scope of the ISA included a review of records of available current and historical documents pertinent to environmental activities conducted in or near the project site; site reconnaissance; review of historical topographic maps and aerial photograph; and a review of environmental database and regulatory agency information.
DTSC	2	The services of a company (Environmental Data Resources, Inc.) that specializes in environmental records searches were retained to search all noted applicable regulatory agency lists and standard environmental record sources to identify locations of potential concern. Tables 2.2.5-2 and 2.2.5-3 in Section 2.2.5 (Hazardous Waste/Materials) of the EIR/EA list the identified sites and the sites' associated risk or status.
DTSC	3	Section 2.2.5.3 (Hazardous Waste/Materials, Environmental Consequences, Temporary Impacts) of the EIR/EA discusses the hazardous materials that are known to occur or have potential to occur in the project area and the standard provisions and requirements that would apply during project construction for treatment and handling of these materials. Section 2.2.5.4 (Hazardous Waste/Materials, Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures) of the EIR/EA discusses measures that would be followed to minimize and avoid construction-related impacts under Alternatives 3 and 5.
DTSC	4	Section 2.2.5.3 (Hazardous Waste/Materials, Environmental Consequences, Temporary Impacts) of the EIR/EA includes a discussion of the potential for pesticides to occur in the project area. Also, mitigation measure MM HWM-5 is proposed in the EIR/EA to require testing

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		for pesticides and appropriate soil handling/disposal, if necessary.
DTSC	5	In accordance with the California Department of Transportation (Department) standard procedures and requirements, an updated ISA report, soil/materials sampling and testing, Phase II site investigations (if required), and hazardous material removal/remediation (if required), will occur, as necessary and appropriate, during the future design phase of the project if a proposed project build alternative is approved for implementation. These activities would be carried out in compliance with DTSC requirements. During the future design phase of the project, all required environmental site investigations, sampling, and/or remediation (if required) shall be conducted under a Workplan approved and overseen by a regulatory agency that has jurisdiction to oversee hazardous waste cleanup. The recommended site investigations, testing, and hazardous material removal/remediation (if required) would occur after the Final EIR/EA is certified, so the findings and sampling results of the subsequent report(s) cannot be summarized in the Final EIR/EA. In accordance with Department standard procedures and requirements, all required testing and removal/remediation, as necessary and appropriate, would be carried out prior to the Department acquiring any of the identified properties for conversion to highway use and prior to construction.
DTSC	6	Refer to response to comment DTSC-5.
DTSC	7	When required soil/materials sampling and testing, Phase II site investigations (if required), and hazardous material removal/remediation (if required) activities are carried out during the future design phase of the project, it will be determined at that time whether known or suspected contaminated sites fall within 2,000 ft of the proposed project site. If it is determined that the project site is within a "Border Zone Property", then appropriate precautions will be developed and followed during the future removal/remediation activities and future construction. This will be determined and handled in accordance with appropriate precautions

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		suggested by DTSC, including the <i>Guidance on Border Zone Properties</i> available on the DTSC website.
DTSC	8	Refer to responses to comments DTSC-1 and DTSC-3.
DTSC	9	The proposed project would modify existing highway transportation facilities and would not include operations that generate hazardous wastes.
DTSC	10	Refer to response to comment DTSC-9.
DTSC	11	Refer to response to comment DTSC-9.
DTSC	12	Refer to response to comment DTSC-9.
DTSC	13	Refer to responses to comments DTSC-1 and DTSC-3.
DTSC	14	It is the Department's standard procedure to include a contact person, title, and email address in all draft environmental documents. This information was included in the "General Information About this Document" (page i) in the project's Draft EIR/EA. Any future correspondence directed toward DTSC related to the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project will identify an appropriate contact person, title, and email address.
MV	1	The City of Mission Viejo's support for Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIR/EA.
MV	2	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
MV	3	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
MV	4	The City of Mission Viejo's opposition to the No Build Alternative is noted.
NAHC	1	A California Historic Resources Information Center (CHRIS) records search was conducted and included in the Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) completed in support of the project's Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA). The HPSR included an Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) and a Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER). The findings of the studies are summarized in Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources) of

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		<p>the EIR/EA.</p> <p>Page 2.1.6-6 of the EIR/EA summarizes the results of the correspondence with designated Native American representatives and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) that was carried out during the preparation of the Draft EIR/EA to solicit information about Native American cultural resources or concerns regarding sites in or near the project area. The NAHC conducted a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search for the project area that produced negative results. Copies of correspondence with the NAHC and the SLF search results are contained in the project's HPSR. Appendix F of the EIR/EA contains copies of correspondence with designated Native American representatives.</p>
NAHC	2	An ASR was completed and included as part of the HPSR completed in support of the project's Draft EIR/EA.
NAHC	3	Refer to response to comment NAHC-2.
NAHC	4	<p>Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR/EA indicates that the portions of the project area are considered to be sensitive by the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation and the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians. Archaeological site CA-ORA-600Ha/CA-ORA-1190 in the project area is thought to be the site of the Native American Juaneño village of Acjachemen. As described in the EIR/EA, an extended Phase I cultural resources investigation study was conducted, which included test excavations within the proposed project's direct footprint to determine whether or not evidence of archaeological deposits is present. The results of the extended Phase I study indicated that site CA-ORA-600Ha/CA-ORA-1190 does not extend into the direct area of potential effects (APE) for the project.</p> <p>The EIR/EA includes mitigation measures MM CR-1 and MM CR-2 to address the</p>

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		unanticipated discovery of cultural materials or human remains during project construction.
NAHC	5	The EIR/EA includes mitigation measure MM CR-2 to address the unanticipated discovery of human remains during project construction. MM CR-2 includes requirements for notification and consultation with the NAHC.
NAHC	6	The EIR/EA includes mitigation measure MM CR-1 which requires diversion of all earth-moving activities away from the discovery area of any cultural materials during project construction until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find. Mitigation measure MM CR-2 is included to address the unanticipated discovery of human remains during project construction. MM CR-2 includes requirements for notification and consultation with the NAHC.
NAHC	7	The HPSR, associated studies, and correspondence with Native American representatives and NAHC completed for the project determined that the project would have no potential for adverse effects to known cultural resources within the APE. The EIR/EA includes mitigation measures MM CR-1 and MM CR-2 to address the unanticipated discovery of cultural materials or human remains during project construction.
OCTA	1	Information regarding the renewed Measure M program and the project's inclusion in the Measure M mitigation program has been incorporated into Section 1.2.2 (Need for the Project, Modal Interrelationships and System Linkages, Regional Planning) of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.
SJC	1	The Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) includes mitigation measures (MM) VA-1 through MM VA-15 which require aesthetic enhancement and landscaping of the entire interchange area. MM VA-14 specifically requires the development of an Aesthetics Report, in conjunction with the City of San Juan Capistrano and California Department of Transportation (Department), during the future project design phase. The

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		Aesthetics Report would serve to set guidelines for the project's landscaping and design elements that address community interests regarding the appearance of the project's new elements.
SJC	2	<p>Improvements at other interchanges in order relieve congestion at the Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway interchange have been considered by the City, the Department, and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). Prior studies, including the City's 2002 <i>Strategic Transportation Plan</i> (STP), have demonstrated that other regional improvements (including a new I-5 southbound off-ramp at Stonehill Drive) would not significantly reduce the current and future projected traffic congestion at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange. The City's 2002 STP indicates that if an I-5 southbound off-ramp at Stonehill Drive were implemented, it would divert traffic primarily from the I-5/Camino Capistrano off-ramp and result in minimal traffic diversion from the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange.</p> <p>The proposed I-5 southbound off-ramp at Stonehill Drive is currently a subject of study as part of OCTA's <i>South Orange County Major Investment Study</i>. Future traffic demands projected for the study area support the conclusion that any future improvements at I-5/Stonehill Drive would need to be in addition to (and not in lieu of) the proposed improvements at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange.</p> <p>The purpose of the proposed I-5/Ortega Highway Improvement Project is to facilitate traffic flows and ease existing and future congestion along Ortega Highway and the I-5 freeway ramps. 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. The interchange</p>

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		<p>currently experiences congestion during the morning and afternoon peak periods, resulting in unacceptable traffic Level of Service (LOS) F conditions. Without any improvements to the interchange, traffic congestion would increase and LOS would further degrade in the future.</p> <p>Approximately 99,000 vehicles per day (vpd) currently use the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange and with the planned development east of the project area, year 2030 traffic at the interchange is projected to reach approximately 121,000 vpd. Without any improvements, the interchange will experience more congestion, continued safety deficiencies leading to higher accident rates, and further degradation of traffic operations at the interchange. The proposed project would improve the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange to alleviate existing and future traffic congestion and delays within the interchange and improve safety.</p>
SJC	3	<p>Due to the fact that only preliminary project design plans have been developed at this point in the project development process, it is not yet possible to determine if the final project design would provide enough space for the Arby's Restaurant to be reconfigured and remain in place. The EIR/EA indicates that the Arby's Restaurant would be a candidate for potential full acquisition and relocation under both Alternatives 3 and 5. Detailed project design plans will be developed as part of the future project design phase (after certification of the Final EIR/EA) if a proposed project build alternative is selected for implementation. As part of the future project design phase, the exact project right-of-way (ROW) needs, based upon the final project design, will be determined. At the end of the project design phase, the Department will begin the project ROW acquisition phase which involves negotiations with affected property owners whose properties need to be acquired in full or part to accommodate the project. If it turns out that the final project design would provide enough remaining space (and driveway access) to allow for the continued operations of a reconfigured Arby's Restaurant in the same location, then the Department would present and discuss/negotiate this proposal with the</p>

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		business/property owner(s).
SJC	4	Refer to response to comment SJC-1.
SJC	5	<p>The proposed project would not be growth inducing in that it does not include residential housing, commercial, office, industrial, or institutional uses, and would not create any long-term employment or sustain future economic or population growth in the City of San Juan Capistrano. The proposed project is called for in the <i>San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i> to accommodate the future traffic growth forecasted for the area.</p> <p>The proposed interchange improvements would increase traffic carrying capacity within the immediate interchange area. An increase in traffic carrying capacity within the interchange is required to achieve the desired reduction in traffic congestion. Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the EIR/EA provides a detailed analysis of predicted future traffic conditions with and without implementation of the project.</p> <p>Pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EIR/EA state that the project “does not represent an ‘expansion of capacity’ to the portions of Ortega Highway or the I-5 freeway beyond the immediate interchange area.” The discussion on pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EIR/EA specifically addresses the potential of the project to generate or accommodate new offsite development or induce additional traffic or development growth that are not otherwise expected to occur under currently adopted development plans or forecasts made by regional planning agencies. The conclusion is that the project, in and of itself, does not have the potential to directly or indirectly induce new offsite land development or population growth.</p>
SJC	6	The proposed project is consistent with the adopted <i>City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i> . Improvements to the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange are proposed to

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		<p>reduce existing and future traffic congestion on Ortega Highway and I-5 and make the City of San Juan Capistrano’s downtown more accessible. If the proposed interchange improvements are constructed, the redesigned interchange will provide improved operational conditions and additional capacity to reduce traffic congestion.</p> <p>The traffic-related effects of the proposed interchange improvements are summarized in Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the EIR/EA. The traffic study results indicate that future (year 2030) average daily traffic (ADT) volumes through the interchange would be the same with and without implementation of the proposed interchange improvements. As such, the scope of the traffic analysis completed for the EIR/EA focused upon the interchange area where physical modifications would occur, including the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway. The traffic study results indicate that with implementation of the preferred Alternative 3, traffic congestion at the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway would improve from current level of service (LOS) F conditions to projected LOS A and B conditions in year 2030.</p> <p>Any additional community traffic studies (i.e., studies beyond the scope of analysis required by CEQA and NEPA guidelines for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project) must be commissioned directly by the City of San Juan Capistrano as a separate project, as the scope of a local issues study would not fall under Department jurisdiction. A locally-commissioned study could identify existing deficiencies (if any) on local City streets and examine additional opportunities to improve access to and within the City’s downtown area.</p> <p>To minimize the construction-related traffic impact of the project, the EIR/EA includes</p>

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		minimization measure MM-TC-1, which requires the preparation of a traffic management plan (TMP) prior to construction. The TMP will identify detour plans to provide alternative routing to pass-through motorists and include measures to minimize construction-related traffic congestion and driver/pedestrian inconveniences. The TMP will be developed collaboratively with input from Department and City of San Juan Capistrano staff.
SJC	7	Section 2.1.4.2 B (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, Affected Environment, Accident Rates) of the EIR/EA provides an analysis of existing traffic accident rates in the interchange area. The analysis concludes that the improvements proposed under Alternatives 3 and 5 would reduce traffic congestion at the interchange, which would potentially decrease accident rates. The proposed improvements are expected to decrease traffic accidents by reducing the number of left turns that motorists must make, thereby reducing the number of turning-movement conflicts (a main cause of traffic accidents at the interchange). These conclusions are not based upon a computer simulation model, as there is no such computer model or program available. Rather, the conclusions regarding decreased accident rates likely to result from the proposed improvements are based upon a qualitative analysis of current causes of traffic accidents at the interchange.
SJC	8	In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines, the EIR/EA includes a cumulative impacts analysis of reasonably foreseeable planned or in-progress cumulative development projects that were identified by the City of San Juan Capistrano and Department at the time that the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft EIR/EA was issued. Table 2.4-1 in Section 2.4 (Cumulative Impacts) of the EIR/EA provides a full list of all cumulative local development projects (City projects) and Department roadway projects considered in the EIR/EA.

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Table K-1		
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		Any additional community traffic and circulation study (i.e., study beyond the scope of analysis required by CEQA and NEPA guidelines for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project) must be commissioned directly by the City of San Juan Capistrano as a separate project, as the scope of a local issues study would not fall under Department jurisdiction. A locally-commissioned study could identify existing deficiencies (if any) on local City streets, identify and examine hypothetical downtown improvement projects (i.e., improvements under consideration that have not yet been formally approved/adopted in concept by the City), examine potential tie-ins with the proposed I-5/Ortega Highway interchange improvements, and examine additional opportunities to improve access to and within the City's downtown area.
SJC COC	1	<p>The proposed Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project is consistent with the adopted <i>City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i>. Improvements to the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange are proposed to reduce existing and future traffic congestion on Ortega Highway and I-5 and make the City of San Juan Capistrano's downtown more accessible. If the proposed interchange improvements are constructed, the redesigned interchange will provide improved operational conditions and additional capacity to reduce traffic congestion. These improvements are expected to decrease traffic accidents by reducing the number of left turns that motorists must make and ease traffic congestion, which would also provide customers with better access to downtown businesses.</p> <p>The traffic-related effects of the proposed interchange improvements are summarized in Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA). The traffic study results indicate that</p>

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Table K-1		
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Letter ID	Comment Number	Response
		<p>future (year 2030) average daily traffic (ADT) volumes through the interchange would be the same with and without implementation of the proposed interchange improvements. As such, the scope of the traffic analysis completed for the EIR/EA focused upon the interchange area where physical modifications would occur, including the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway. The traffic study results indicate that with implementation of the preferred Alternative 3, traffic congestion at the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway would improve from current level of service (LOS) F conditions to projected LOS A and B conditions in year 2030.</p> <p>To minimize the construction-related traffic impact of the project, the EIR/EA includes minimization measure MM-TC-1, which requires the preparation of a traffic management plan (TMP) prior to construction. The TMP will identify detour plans to provide alternative routing to pass-through motorists and include measures to minimize construction-related traffic congestion and driver/pedestrian inconveniences. The TMP will be developed collaboratively with input from California Department of Transportation (Department) and City of San Juan Capistrano staff.</p> <p>Additionally, construction phasing will be incorporated as an aid in helping motorists get through the construction zones as efficiently as possible. For example, the Ortega Highway bridge replacement will be completed in phases to ensure that lanes of traffic on the bridge are maintained open during construction so that traffic will be able to circulate through the construction zone and access the downtown area.</p> <p>The scope of the EIR/EA is focused upon the potential environmental effects of the I-5/Ortega</p>

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Table K-1		
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Letter ID	Comment Number	Response
		<p>Highway Interchange Improvement Project. A Community Impact Assessment and a Relocation Impact Report were completed for the project to examine the short-term (construction-related) and long-term social and economic effects of the proposed interchange improvements in accordance with Department procedures and consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. The results of the studies are summarized in Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA.</p> <p>Any additional economic or community traffic study (i.e., study beyond the scope of analysis required by CEQA and NEPA guidelines for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project) must be commissioned directly by either the City of San Juan Capistrano or the San Juan Capistrano Chamber of Commerce as separate project, as the scope of a local issues study would not fall under Department jurisdiction. A locally-commissioned study could identify existing deficiencies (if any) on local City streets and examine additional opportunities to improve access to and within the City’s downtown area and sustain economic growth.</p>

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Table K-2
Standard Responses to Comments

Standard Response Number	Response
R-1	<p>The economic and community impacts associated with property acquisitions and business relocations be required if the proposed project is implemented are discussed in Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA). Section 2.1.2.2 (Community Impacts, Relocations) of the EIR/EA includes the following information regarding the California Department of Transportation (Department) Relocation Assistance Program (RAP):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Department’s RAP is based on the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended, and 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 24. The purpose of RAP is to ensure that individuals, families, businesses, and others that are required to relocate because of a transportation project are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably so that people and businesses will not suffer disproportionate injuries because of projects designed for the benefit of the public as a whole.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Through RAP, displaced businesses would be assisted with finding alternative locations, either within or outside the city limits or Relocation Resource Area as appropriate. Displaced businesses are also eligible for reimbursement of certain relocation costs, such as the replacement of business stationary or telephone connection fees, and moving costs. A small business displacee may be eligible to choose a fixed payment “in lieu” of the payments for actual moving and related expenses and actual reasonable reestablishments expenses. The in-lieu payment is based on the previous two taxable years, with certain exceptions. Appendix B of the EIR/EA provides a full summary of the RAP, which includes a description of relocation benefits.</p>

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	<p>Relocation assistance payments and counseling will be provided to businesses in accordance with the Uniform Act, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation for businesses and a decent, safe, and sanitary home for displaced residents, if applicable. All eligible displacees will be entitled to moving expenses. All relocation benefits and services will be provided equitably to all business relocates without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origins, and disability as specified under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.). Appendix A of the EIR/EA contains a copy of the Department’s Title VI Policy Statement.</p> <p>The EIR/EA also includes the following minimization measure (MM) COM-2 to summarize the existing laws and project requirements that must be adhered to with respect to property acquisitions and relocations:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">MM COM-2 Federal, state, and local government property acquisition programs shall be followed for the acquisition of privately and publicly owned properties. Compensation and relocation assistance shall be provided in accordance with the Uniform Relocation and Real Properties Acquisition Policies act of 1970 as Amended (42 U.S.C. 4601–4655) (Uniform Act), as well as FHWA regulations implementing the Uniform Act. Additional Department and/or City assistance shall be provided, if applicable.</p> <p>With the adherence to existing laws, regulations, and policies which require compensation and relocation assistance for affected residents and businesses, it is anticipated that all possible efforts will be made to find a suitable location for the relocation of business that would be affected by the proposed project. If the project is approved for implementation, during the future project design and right-of-way acquisition phases, the Department would act in conjunction with the City of San Juan Capistrano to identify all suitable areas for</p>

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Table K-2
Standard Responses to Comments

Standard Response Number	Response
	potential business relocations within the City. If necessary, additional suitable areas for potential business relocations in the general project area would also be identified.
R-2	<p>Your suggestions have been reviewed by the California Department of Transportation (Department) and City of San Juan Capistrano and will be considered during the selection of a final project alternative and during the future design of the selected project alternative.</p> <p>The Department, in conjunction with the City of San Juan Capistrano, has spent a considerable amount of time and effort to fully explore and consider a full range of options for the proposed street layout of the Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway interchange area. The City has worked in collaboration with the Department since the project was initiated in 2000 to explore a full range of alternatives for the proposed interchange improvements, including various freeway ramp and street alignment options. Refer to Section 1.2 (Purpose and Need) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) for a discussion of the existing and future transportation deficiencies that the proposed interchange improvements are intended to address. Refer to Section 1.4 (Alternatives) of the EIR/EA for a full discussion of the project history and outreach conducted with the City and community to develop and select proposed Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative), Alternative 5, and several other alternatives that have since been eliminated from further consideration.</p>
R-3	Improvements at other interchanges in order to relieve congestion at the Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway interchange have been considered by the City of San Juan Capistrano, the California Department of Transportation (Department), and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). Prior studies, including the City's 2002 <i>Strategic Transportation Plan</i> (STP), have demonstrated that other regional improvements (including a new I-5 southbound off-ramp at Stonehill Drive) would not significantly reduce the current and future projected traffic congestion at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange. The City's 2002 STP indicates that if an I-5 southbound off-ramp at Stonehill Drive were implemented, it would divert traffic primarily from the I-

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Standard Response Number	Response
	<p>5/Camino Capistrano off-ramp and result in minimal traffic diversion from the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange.</p> <p>The proposed I-5 southbound off-ramp at Stonehill Drive is currently a subject of study as part of OCTA's <i>South Orange County Major Investment Study</i>. Future traffic demands projected for the study area support the conclusion that any future improvements to the regional transportation network, including at I-5/Stonehill Drive, would need to be in addition to (and not in lieu of) the proposed improvements at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange.</p>
R-4	<p>Your suggestions regarding local transportation improvements have been reviewed by the California Department of Transportation (Department) and City of San Juan Capistrano.</p> <p>The scope of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) is focused upon the potential environmental effects of the Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project. The proposed I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project is consistent with the adopted <i>City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i>. Improvements to the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange are proposed to reduce existing and future traffic congestion on Ortega Highway and I-5 and make the City of San Juan Capistrano's downtown more accessible. If the proposed interchange improvements are constructed, the redesigned interchange will provide improved operational conditions and additional capacity to reduce traffic congestion. These improvements are expected to decrease traffic accidents by reducing the number of left turns that motorists must make and ease traffic congestion, which would also provide customers with better access to downtown businesses.</p> <p>The traffic-related effects of the proposed interchange improvements are summarized in Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the EIR/EA. The traffic study results indicate that future</p>

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	<p>(year 2030) average daily traffic (ADT) volumes through the interchange would be the same with and without implementation of the proposed interchange improvements. As such, the scope of the traffic analysis completed for the EIR/EA focused upon the interchange area where physical modifications would occur, including the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway. The traffic study results indicate that with implementation of the Preferred Alternative 3, traffic congestion at the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway would improve from current level of service (LOS) F conditions to projected LOS A and B conditions in year 2030.</p> <p>Any additional economic or community traffic study [i.e., study beyond the scope of analysis required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project] must be commissioned directly by the City of San Juan Capistrano as a separate project, as the scope of a local issues study would not fall under Department jurisdiction. A locally-commissioned study could identify existing deficiencies (if any) on local City streets and examine additional opportunities to improve access to and within the City's downtown area and sustain economic growth.</p>
R-5	<p>The proposed project would not be growth inducing in that it does not include residential housing, commercial, office, industrial, or institutional uses, and would not create any long-term employment or sustain future economic or population growth in the City of San Juan Capistrano. The proposed project is called for in the <i>San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i> to accommodate the future traffic growth forecasted for the area.</p> <p>The proposed interchange improvements would increase traffic carrying capacity within the immediate interchange area. An increase in traffic carrying capacity within the interchange is required to achieve the</p>

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	<p>desired reduction in traffic congestion. Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the Environmental Impacts Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) provides a detailed analysis of predicted future traffic conditions with and without implementation of the project.</p> <p>Pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EIR/EA state that the project “does not represent an ‘expansion of capacity’ to the portions of Ortega Highway or the I-5 freeway beyond the immediate interchange area.” The discussion on pages 2-2 and 2-3 of the EIR/EA specifically addresses the potential of the project to generate or accommodate new offsite development or induce additional traffic or development growth that are not otherwise expected to occur under currently adopted development plans or forecasts made by regional planning agencies. The conclusion is that the project, in and of itself, does not have the potential to directly or indirectly induce new offsite land development or population growth.</p>

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ABOURNE	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Thank you for your interest in the project.
ADABKHAH1	1	Refer to Standard Response R-1 in Table K-2. It is anticipated that all possible efforts will be made to find a suitable location within the City of San Juan Capistrano for the relocation of the Denny's Restaurant.
ADABKHAH2	1	<p>As part of the routine project development procedures followed by the California Department of Transportation (Department), the cost of property acquisition and business relocation has been included in the project costs estimates prepared to date.</p> <p>Refer to Standard Response R-1 in Table K-2. It is anticipated that all possible efforts will be made to find a suitable location within the City of San Juan Capistrano for the relocation of the Denny's Restaurant.</p> <p>Your support for Alternative 5 is noted.</p>
ALTMAN	1	<p>The California Department of Transportation (Department) received the referenced letter from the City of San Juan Capistrano Chamber of Commerce. The referenced letter is included as letter ID "SJC COC" and a written response to the letter is included in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA).</p> <p>Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.</p>
ALTMAN	2	The proposed I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project is consistent with the adopted <i>City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan Circulation Element</i> . Improvements to the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange are proposed to reduce existing and future traffic congestion on Ortega Highway and I-5 and make the City of San Juan Capistrano's downtown more

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		<p>accessible. If the proposed interchange improvements are constructed, the redesigned interchange will provide improved operational conditions and additional capacity to reduce traffic congestion. These improvements are expected to decrease traffic accidents by reducing the number of left turns that motorists must make and ease traffic congestion, which would also provide customers with better access to downtown businesses.</p> <p>The traffic-related effects of the proposed interchange improvements are summarized in Section 2.1.4 (Traffic & Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities) of the EIR/EA. The traffic study results indicate that future (year 2030) average daily traffic (ADT) volumes through the interchange would be the same with and without implementation of the proposed interchange improvements. As such, the scope of the traffic analysis completed for the EIR/EA focused upon the interchange area where physical modifications would occur, including the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway. The traffic study results indicate that with implementation of the preferred Alternative 3, traffic congestion at the intersection of Del Obispo Street/Ortega Highway would improve from current level of service (LOS) F conditions to projected LOS A and B conditions in year 2030.</p> <p>To minimize the construction-related traffic impact of the project, the EIR/EA includes minimization measure MM-TC-1, which requires the preparation of a traffic management plan (TMP) prior to construction. The TMP will identify detour plans to provide alternative routing to pass-through motorists and include measures to minimize construction-related traffic congestion and driver/pedestrian inconveniences. The TMP will be developed collaboratively with input from California Department of Transportation (Department) and City of San Juan Capistrano staff.</p>

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		<p>Additionally, construction phasing will be incorporated as an aid in helping motorists get through the construction zones as efficiently as possible. For example, the Ortega Highway bridge replacement will be completed in phases to ensure that lanes of traffic on the bridge are maintained open during construction so that traffic will be able to circulate through the construction zone and access the downtown area.</p> <p>The scope of the EIR/EA is focused upon the potential environmental effects of the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project. A Community Impact Assessment and a Relocation Impact Report were completed for the project to examine the short-term (construction-related) and long-term social and economic effects of the proposed interchange improvements in accordance with Department procedures and consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. The results of the studies are summarized in Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA.</p> <p>Any additional economic or community traffic study (i.e., study beyond the scope of analysis required by CEQA and NEPA guidelines for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project) must be commissioned directly by either the City of San Juan Capistrano or the San Juan Capistrano Chamber of Commerce as a separate project, as the scope of a local issues study would not fall under Department jurisdiction. A locally-commissioned study could identify existing deficiencies (if any) on local City streets and examine additional opportunities to improve access to and within the City's downtown area and sustain economic growth.</p>

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ALTMAN	3	Refer to response to comment ALTMAN-2.
BERKSHIRE	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. In regards to the commenter’s suggestion of “a screen fence over the overpass for the safety of people walking across the bridge”, if the project is approved for implementation, then the California Department of Transportation (Department) and City of San Juan Capistrano will consider the feasibility, need, and design compatibility of this concept as a permanent design feature of the overcrossing when developing the final (detailed) project design plans. During project construction, it is the Department’s standard procedure to include temporary screen fencing and safety barriers, when appropriate and necessary, to ensure pedestrian and traffic safety within construction zones.
BERKSHIRE	2	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Alternative 3 is identified as the Preferred Alternative in the EIR/EA. This alternative includes a realignment of the intersection of Del Obispo Street and Ortega Highway to accommodate a “free right” turn pocket for vehicles turning from northbound Del Obispo Street to the Interstate 5 (I-5) southbound on-ramp. This turn pocket would allow vehicles to make this turn with less delay from signals and opposing traffic, thereby alleviating backup of traffic on Del Obispo Street. In addition, Alternative 3 would replace the Ortega Highway/I-5 freeway overcrossing (bridge) to allow for additional lanes (eight total) across the bridge, including a dedicated left turn pocket for vehicles turning from westbound Ortega Highway to the I-5 southbound on-ramp.
BROWN	1	Your support for the project is noted.
DBUSK	1	Your opinions concerning the various project alternatives are noted.

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DBUSK	2	Alternative 3 has been identified in the Final Environmental Impacts Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 is also included in the Final EIR/EA. The analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that both alternatives would provide sufficient traffic congestion relief to meet the current and projected future (through year 2035) traffic performance objectives established by the City of San Juan Capistrano and the California Department of Transportation (Department).
CAMPBELL	1	Your support for the proposed Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project is noted. The noted section of Ortega Highway between Calle Entradero and Palm Hill is not within the project limits of the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project. This section of Ortega Highway (including landscaping along this section) would not be modified by the proposed interchange improvements.
CAMPBELL	2	The completion of the proposed southern extension of State Route 241 (SR-241) Toll Road is not under the jurisdiction or control of the California Department of Transportation (Department) or the City of San Juan Capistrano and is not a subject of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project. For information regarding the current status of the proposed southern extension of the SR-241 Toll Road, contact the Transportation Corridor Agencies at (949) 754-3400 or log on to: www.thetollroads.com .
CAPO33	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.
CERRUTI	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.
DALE	1	Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-5 in Table K-2.
DALE	2	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
DALE	3	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.
ESCAMILLA	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.

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ECAMIILLA	2	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
ESCAMILLA	3	<p>A thorough analysis of air quality effects was completed for this project. The air quality analysis results are summarized in Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA). The air quality analysis determined that, after mitigation, there would be less than significant impacts under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) criteria and minor impacts under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) criteria to sensitive receptors of air quality in the project area.</p> <p>Section 2.2.6.3 C (Air Quality, Environmental Consequences, Permanent Impacts) of the EIR/EA concludes that under the No Build Alternative, there is the potential for air pollutant emissions to increase in the long term as the traffic level of service (LOS) at the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange continues to decline in the future because of increasing traffic congestion. Under the No Build Alternative scenario, the I-5/Ortega Highway interchange would operate at unacceptable traffic LOS E/F during peak traffic hours in year 2030; therefore, a potential deterioration in air quality at the project location would be expected.</p> <p>Section 2.2.6.3 C (Air Quality, Environmental Consequences, Permanent Impacts) of the EIR/EA concludes that Alternatives 3 and 5 are not expected to result in an adverse effect related to local or regional air quality. The proposed build alternatives are not expected to result in localized carbon monoxide (CO) or particulate matter (PM₁₀, or PM_{2.5}) “hot spot” concentrations. In addition, the EIR/EA concludes that the traffic congestion relief provided by the proposed build alternatives would not create any new violation of air quality standards and would not increase the severity or number of existing air quality violations in the region.</p>

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		It should be noted that the EIR/EA has identified Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative. If Alternative 3 is approved for implementation, then the general configuration of the Interstate 5 (I-5) southbound off-ramp to Ortega Highway (i.e., the freeway ramp adjacent to the San Juan Elementary School site) would be retained. Alternative 3 would serve to reduce traffic congestion and reduce the occurrence of stationary, idling vehicles near the school site, as compared to the No Build Alternative. A reduction in stationary, idling vehicles has been proven to have a beneficial effect in minimizing localized particulate matter concentrations.
EXWORTHY	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.
EXWORTHY	2	Refer to Standard Response R-4 in Table K-2.
EXWORTHY	3	Refer to Standard Responses R-3 and R-4 in Table K-2.
EXWORTHY	4	Refer to Standard Response R-4 in Table K-2.
FRANCE-MORAN	1	Your support of Alternative 3 and opposition to Alternative 5 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA), primarily to avoid impacts to the San Juan Elementary School.
FRANCE-MORAN	2	Refer to Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA for a discussion of right-of-way and relocation impacts to San Juan Elementary School that would occur if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation. Alternative 5 would require acquisition of a portion of the school's playground area, as well as property acquisition that would require the relocation of the YMCA building and a classroom building. If Alternative 5 is selected for implementation, it is anticipated that the San Juan Elementary School site could be reconfigured to accommodate continued operation of the school at its present location.
FRANCE-MORAN	3	The future operational and curricular plans for the San Juan Elementary School are directly controlled by the Capistrano Unified School District and are not a subject of analysis in the

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		EIR/EA.
FRIESE	1	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
FRIESE	2	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
FRIESE	3	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.
GANTES	1	Due to the fact that only preliminary project design plans have been developed at this point in the project development process, it is not yet possible to determine if the final project design would provide enough space for the Arby's Restaurant to be reconfigured and remain in place. The Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) indicates that the Arby's Restaurant would be a candidate for potential full acquisition and relocation under both Alternatives 3 and 5. Detailed project design plans will be developed as part of the future project design phase (after certification of the Final EIR/EA) if a proposed project build alternative is selected for implementation. As part of the future project design phase, the exact project right-of-way (ROW) needs, based upon the final project design, will be determined. At the end of the project design phase, the California Department of Transportation (Department) will begin the project ROW acquisition phase which involves negotiations with affected property owners whose properties need to be acquired in full or part to accommodate the project. If it turns out that the final project design would provide enough remaining space (and driveway access) to allow for the continued operations of a reconfigured Arby's Restaurant in the same location, then the Department would present and discuss/negotiate this proposal with the business/property owner(s).
GESTO	1	Refer to Standard Response R-4 in Table K-2.
HEGARTY	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. The Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) includes mitigation

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		measures (MM) VA-1 through MM VA-15 which require aesthetic enhancement and landscaping of the entire interchange area. MM VA-14 specifically requires the development of an Aesthetics Report, in conjunction with the City of San Juan Capistrano and California Department of Transportation (Department), during the future project design phase. The Aesthetics Report would serve to set guidelines for the project's landscaping and design elements that address community interests regarding the appearance of the project's new elements.
GJONES	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Alternative 2 is no longer under consideration as a viable project alternative, as it has been determined that Alternative 2 would not achieve the overall purpose and need of the project.
GJONES	2	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Your opposition to Alternative 5 is noted.
GJONES	3	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Your opposition to Alternative 5 is noted.
GJONES	4	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Alternative 4 is no longer under consideration as a viable project alternative, as it has been determined that Alternative 4 would not achieve the overall purpose and need of the project. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA).
GJONES	5	Refer to response to comment GJONES-1.
JJONES	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. The proposed project is focused upon a highway interchange area and tunneling is not an option that would accommodate the required redesign of the interchange. Rather, tunneling is an option that is more appropriately explored for linear transportation projects (e.g., longer stretches of highway or railroad routes).

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JJONES	2	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
LY	3	There is no comment to respond to. The commenter's email was received.
MCCARDLE	1	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project. Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2.
MCCARDLE	2	Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-4 in Table K-2.
MCCARDLE	3	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Considered Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 have been removed from further consideration and are not analyzed as viable project build alternatives in the EIR/EA. These alternatives are discussed in Section 1.4.4 (Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA).
MCCARDLE	4	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
MCCARDLE	5	The referenced proposal for widening of Ortega Highway is not a component of the proposed Interstate 5 (I-5)/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project and is not a subject of analysis in the EIR/EA.
MCCARDLE	6	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
C.MCNEIL	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA), primarily to avoid impacts to the San Juan Elementary School.

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C.MCNEIL	2	Refer to Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA for a discussion of right-of-way and relocation impacts to San Juan Elementary School that would occur if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation. Alternative 5 would require acquisition of a portion of the school's playground area, as well as property acquisition that would require the relocation of the YMCA building and a classroom building. If Alternative 5 is selected for implementation, it is anticipated that the San Juan Elementary School site could be reconfigured to accommodate continued operation of the school at its present location.
H.MCNEIL	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA), primarily to avoid impacts to the San Juan Elementary School.
H.MCNEIL	2	Refer to Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA for a discussion of right-of-way and relocation impacts to San Juan Elementary School that would occur if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation. Alternative 5 would require acquisition of a portion of the school's playground area, as well as property acquisition that would require the relocation of the YMCA building and a classroom building. If Alternative 5 is selected for implementation, it is anticipated that the San Juan Elementary School site could be reconfigured to accommodate continued operation of the school at its present location.
PALMER	1	Refer to Standard Responses R-2, R-3, and R-4 in Table K-2.
PALMER	2	Refer to Standard Responses R-3 and R-4 in Table K-2.
PALMER	3	Refer to Standard Responses R-3 and R-4 in Table K-2.
PETERSON	1	Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-4 in Table K-2.
POLLARD	1	You have been added to the project mailing list.
PULE	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA),

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		primarily to avoid impacts to the San Juan Elementary School.
PULE	2	Thorough air quality and noise analyses were completed for this project. The EIR/EA determined that, after mitigation, there would be less than significant impacts under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) criteria and minor impacts under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) criteria to sensitive receptors of air quality and noise in the project area, including San Juan Elementary School. Refer to Section 2.2.6 (Air Quality), Section 2.2.7 (Noise), and Tables ES 3 and 4 (Summary of Temporary and Permanent Impacts) of the EIR/EA for more information.
RABALAIS	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA), primarily to avoid impacts to the San Juan Elementary School.
SAUVAGEAU	1	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Alternative 1 is no longer under consideration as a viable project alternative, as it has been determined that Alternative 1 would not achieve the overall purpose and need of the project.
SAUVAGEAU	2	Refer to response to comment SAUVAGEAU-1.
SAVAGE	1	Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-4 in Table K-2.
SAVAGE	2	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
SAVAGE	3	Your support for Alternative 5 is noted.
SIEGEL	1	Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-4 in Table K-2. Alternative 3 has been identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 is also included in the Final EIR/EA. The analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that both alternatives would provide sufficient traffic congestion relief to meet the current and projected future (through

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		year 2035) traffic performance objectives established by the City of San Juan Capistrano and the California Department of Transportation (Department).
SIEGEL	2	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
SIEGEL	3	<p>A Community Impact Assessment was completed for the project to examine the short-term (construction-related) and long-term social and economic effects of the proposed interchange improvements in accordance with Department procedures and consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. The results of the studies are summarized in Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA.</p> <p>Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR/EA provides an analysis that concludes that the proposed project would not have an adverse effect upon cultural resources.</p>
STROSCHER	1	<p>Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-5 in Table K-2.</p> <p>Alternative 3 has been identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 is also included in the Final EIR/EA. The analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that both alternatives would provide sufficient traffic congestion relief to meet the current and projected future (through year 2035) traffic performance objectives established by the City of San Juan Capistrano and the California Department of Transportation (Department).</p>
STROSCHER	2	Your support of Alternative 5 is noted.
STROSCHER	3	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Alternative 4 is no longer under consideration as a viable project alternative, as it has been determined that Alternative 4 would not achieve the overall purpose and need of the project. Please note that Alternative 5 was developed as

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		a direct result of a previous suggestion received during the project alternatives development phase to move the proposed Interstate 5 (I-5) loop ramp further over into the San Juan Elementary School property. In other words, Alternative 4 has already been “massaged” and developed into Alternative 5. The Capistrano Unified School District has most recently expressed support for Alternative 3 and opposition to Alternative 5.
STROSCHER	4	The Measure M funds allocated to the project are available to pay for right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, as well as other costs related to project development and construction. Due to the extent and sensitivity associated with the required ROW acquisitions and business relocations that would be required to accommodate the project, the Department has already planned for additional time in the future ROW acquisition phase of the project development schedule. Refer to Standard Response R-1 in Table K-2 for information regarding the ROW acquisition and relocation process that will be followed if the project is approved for implementation.
SUKUT	1	Your support for Alternative 5 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 is also included in the Final EIR/EA. The analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that both alternatives would provide sufficient traffic congestion relief to meet the current and projected future (through year 2035) traffic performance objectives established by the City of San Juan Capistrano and the California Department of Transportation (Department).
TAY-BIB	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA), primarily to avoid impacts to the San Juan Elementary School. Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR/EA provides an analysis that concludes that the proposed project

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		would not have an adverse effect upon cultural resources. The cultural resources analysis conducted for the project included a detailed evaluation of the entire San Juan Elementary School site, including a subsurface investigation (with negative results) to look for evidence of archaeological deposits.
TAY-BIB	2	The Final EIR/EA has been updated to reflect the presence and required protection measures for the California Pepper Heritage Tree located adjacent to Spring Street on the San Juan Elementary School site. Discussions regarding the Heritage Tree have been added to Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources), Section 2.3.3 (Biological Environment, Plant Species), Section 3.2.4 (CEQA Evaluation, Biological Resources), Table ES-1 (under the Biological Environment heading), and Appendix C (Minimization and Mitigation Summary) of the Final EIR/EA. The Final EIR/EA notes that Alternative 3 (the Preferred Alternative) would not have the potential to directly or indirectly impact the Heritage Tree. Minimization measures (MM) BIO-6 and MM BIO-7 have been added to the Final EIR/EA to ensure that adverse effects to the Heritage Tree would be avoided if Alternative 5 is selected for implementation.
TRYON	1	Your support for Alternative 3 is noted. Refer to Standard Responses R-3 and R-4 in Table K-2.
TRYON	2	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
TSCHAIKOWSKY	1	Your opposition to Alternative 5 is noted.
TSCHAIKOWSKY	2	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Section 1.4.4 (Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) explains that previously considered project Alternatives 1, and 2 have been removed from further consideration and are not analyzed as viable project build alternatives in the EIR/EA. It has been determined that Alternatives 1 and 2 would not satisfy

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		the purpose and need of the project.
TSCHAIKOWSKY	3	<p>A Community Impact Assessment was completed for the project to examine the short-term (construction-related) and long-term social and economic effects of the proposed interchange improvements in accordance with Department procedures and consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. The results of the studies are summarized in Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA.</p> <p>Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR/EA provides an analysis that concludes that the proposed project would not have an adverse effect upon cultural resources.</p>
TUCKER	1	Your support for Alternative 5 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 is also included in the Final EIR/EA. The analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that both alternatives would provide sufficient traffic congestion relief to meet the current and projected future (through year 2035) traffic performance objectives established by the City of San Juan Capistrano and the California Department of Transportation (Department).
TUCKER	2	Refer to Standard Responses R-3, R-4, and R-5 in Table K-2.
TUCKER	3	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Section 1.4.4 (Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion) of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) explains that previously considered project Alternative 4 has been removed from further consideration and is not analyzed as a viable project build alternative in the EIR/EA. It has been determined that Alternative 4 would not satisfy the purpose and need of the project.

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TUCKER	4	Refer to Standard Response R-4 in Table K-2.
TUCKER	5	Refer to Standard Response R-4 in Table K-2.
TUCKER	6	Refer to Standard Response R-2 in Table K-2. Your comment regarding elimination of the referenced concrete bubble will be considered by the Department and City of San Juan Capistrano during the future design of the selected project alternative.
TUCKER	7	Refer to response to comment TUCKER-1. Section 1.4.4 (Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion) of the EIR/EA explains that previously considered project Alternative 1 has been removed from further consideration and is not analyzed as viable project build alternative in the EIR/EA. It has been determined that Alternative 1 would not satisfy the purpose and need of the project.
TUGWELL	1	<p>To minimize the construction-related traffic impact of the project, the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) includes minimization measure (MM) TC-1, which requires the preparation of a traffic management plan (TMP) prior to construction. The TMP will identify detour plans to provide alternative routing to pass-through motorists and include measures to minimize construction-related traffic congestion and driver/pedestrian inconveniences. The TMP will be developed collaboratively with input from California Department of Transportation (Department) and City of San Juan Capistrano staff.</p> <p>Additionally, construction phasing will be incorporated as an aid in helping motorists get through the construction zones as efficiently as possible. For example, the Ortega Highway bridge replacement will be completed in phases to ensure that lanes of traffic on the bridge are maintained open during construction so that traffic will be able to circulate through the construction zone and access the downtown area.</p>

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		The suggestion for a study to examine current and future pavement conditions has been reviewed by the Department and City of San Juan Capistrano. Any additional community traffic or pavement condition study [i.e., study beyond the scope of analysis required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project] must be commissioned directly by the City of San Juan Capistrano as a separate project, as the scope of a local issues study would not fall under Department jurisdiction. A locally-commissioned study could identify existing pavement deficiencies on local City streets and examine options for improvements, if necessary.
DTUGWELL	1	Refer to Standard Response R-4 in Table K-2.
WANN	1	Your opposition to the proposed project is noted. Refer to Standard Responses R-2, R-3, and R-4 in Table K-2. A Community Impact Assessment was completed for the project to examine the short-term (construction-related) and long-term social and economic effects of the proposed interchange improvements in accordance with California Department of Transportation (Department) procedures and consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines. The results of the studies are summarized in Section 2.1.2 (Community Impacts) of the EIR/EA. In addition, Section 2.1.6 (Cultural Resources) of the EIR/EA provides an analysis that concludes that the proposed project would not have an adverse effect upon cultural and resources, including Mission San Juan Capistrano.
WANN	2	Refer to response to comment WANN-1.
WANN	3	Refer to response to comment WANN-1.

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WEAVER	1	Refer to Standard Response R-3 in Table K-2.
WINDES	1	Refer to Standard Responses R-2 and R-4 in Table K-2. Your support for Alternative 5 is noted. Alternative 3 has been identified in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 5 is also included in the Final EIR/EA. The analysis presented in the EIR/EA demonstrates that both alternatives would provide sufficient traffic congestion relief to meet the current and projected future (through year 2035) traffic performance objectives established by the City of San Juan Capistrano and the California Department of Transportation (Department).
WINDES	2	Thank you for your comment and interest in the project.
WINDES	3	The completion of the proposed southern extension of State Route 241 (SR-241) Toll Road is not under the jurisdiction or control of the Department or the City of San Juan Capistrano and is not a subject of the EIR/EA for the I-5/Ortega Highway Interchange Improvement Project. For information regarding the current status of the proposed southern extension of the SR-241 Toll Road, contact the Transportation Corridor Agencies at (949) 754-3400 or log on to: www.thetollroads.com .