Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This chapter describes the current environmental setting in the study area and identifies the potential impacts of implementing the proposed project. The discussion for each environmental topic discussed below will describe the present conditions, discuss the potential impacts of building the proposed project, and indicate which measures would be taken to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate those impacts. Only mitigation measures within this document have been identified by number. Therefore, the remaining measures, consisting of avoidance and/or minimization measures have not been numbered. To achieve the project purpose and need and avoid or minimize environmental impacts, two Build Alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) and the No Build Alternative are being evaluated.

The environmental analysis contained within the following chapter considers the potential environmental consequences associated with implementation of the proposed project. The environmental impact analysis discusses potential impacts in four general categories: human environment, physical environment, biological environment, and cumulative impacts. As part of the scoping and environmental analysis conducted for the project, the following environmental issues were considered, but no adverse impacts were identified: coastal zone, wild and scenic river areas, and farmlands/timberlands. There is no further discussion regarding these issues in this document. Because the project is not located within the Coastal Zone, no discussion of this topic is included. Furthermore, discussion regarding the topics of wild and scenic rivers and farmland/timberlands was not included within this document due to the absence of these resources in the project area.

The Department has not adopted thresholds of significance pursuant to CEQA. As a statewide agency covering diverse geographic areas, the Department has, as a matter of policy, left the determination of significance to District PDT. As such, the District 12 PDT has made the significance determination as shown at the end of each topical section under the heading “Level of Significance.” The use of the term “thresholds of significance” is not used for projects on the State Highway System (SHS).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

2.1.1 Land Use

2.1.1.1 Affected Environment

The following describes the existing land uses and the general plan designated land uses in the project area. This section will also assess potential impacts caused by the proposed project on existing and proposed land uses within the project area. The City and County General Plans, as they apply to the project area, were reviewed to identify designated land uses and planning policies and goals. Aerial photographs were examined and site visits were conducted to identify existing land uses, and the SCAG Draft 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan was reviewed to identify foreseeable and recent development projects within the project area (Figure 2.1.1-1).

2.1.1.2 Existing and Future Land Uses

The study area is located entirely within the City of San Juan Capistrano city limits. County unincorporated property is located east of and outside the project limits. In the project vicinity, land uses are designated by the City General Plan to the north, south, and west, and the County General Plan to the east of the project limits.

The project site includes the segment of SR-74 that consists of four (4) lanes, with two lanes in each direction from Calle Entradero to within approximately 663 ft of the Via Cordova and SR-74 intersection. The road then tapers to two (2) lanes, with one lane in each. Land uses surrounding the project site consist of mostly residential land uses between areas utilized for farming or ranching purposes and vacant, undeveloped parcels. Areas on the south side of SR-74 predominately comprise high-density single-family residential land uses. Areas located immediately north and south of the project limits along SR-74 are under the jurisdiction of the City. The City has designated SR-74 as a scenic corridor. The project limits have not been officially designated as a California State Scenic Highway, but SR-74 through the project site is eligible for the designation. The significance of a State Scenic Highway designation is further discussed in Section 2.1.6, Visual and Aesthetics.

The City is primarily a residential community. Any nonresidential land use within the existing community would require compatibility or open space land uses to serve as a buffer between any residential and nonresidential developments. Please refer to

STEEPLECHASE DR
HUNT CLUB DR
ASCOT LN
PALM HILL DR
Begin Proposed Sidewalk Alternative 2
Begin Removal of Existing Sidewalk Alternatives 1 and 2
End Proposed Sidewalk Alternative 2
End Removal of Existing Sidewalk Alternatives 1 and 2
Project Limits
VIA SONORA
VIA CORDOVA
VIA MADERA
GL ENTRADERO
PAS ALBA
VIA SOLANA
VIA RUBI
VIA CRISTAL
VIA PERLA
PAS VALENCIA
VIA ESTENAGA

LEGEND

- Project Improvements
- TCE (Chain Link Fence)
- Drainage
- Proposed Retaining Wall
- Proposed Sound Wall
- Proposed Retaining Wall (Only represented in Alternative 2)
- Proposed Right-of-Way
- Existing Right-of-Way
- City Boundary

Land Use

- Very Low-Density Residential
- Medium Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential

0 75 150 Feet

Map Index

1
2
74

FIGURE 2.1.1-1

Sheet 1 of 2

Lower SR-74 Widening Project

Existing Land Uses

12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9

EA# 086920

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

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TOYON DR
STRAWBERRY LN
SHADE TREE LN
City of San Juan Capistrano
Unincorporated Orange County
Project Limits
Joins County Widening Project
ORTEGA HWY
VIA ANZAR
VIA ESTEVAGA
VIA FERREGARTE
AVD SIEGA
PAS DI AVA

LEGEND

- Project Improvements
- TCE (Chain Link Fence)
- Drainage
- Proposed Retaining Wall
- Proposed Sound Wall
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- Existing Right-of-Way
- City Boundary

Land Use

- Very Low-Density Residential
- Medium Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential

0 75 150 Feet

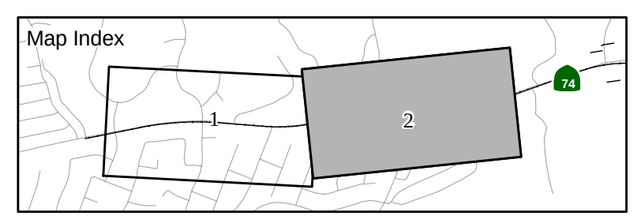

FIGURE 2.1.1-1

Sheet 2 of 2

Lower SR-74 Widening Project

Existing Land Uses

12-ORA-74 PM 1.0/1.9

EA# 086920

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

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Section 2.1.2, Growth, for a more detailed description of the potential growth within the project area.

The project area is characterized primarily by residential land uses. Areas of nonresidential land uses are dispersed throughout and buffered by areas of open space. Throughout the project area, projected future developments are mainly residential and business-related. General Plan land use designations in the project vicinity are shown in Figure 2.1.1-1. Table 2.1.1-1 identifies planned developments in the project vicinity that are currently under construction or have not yet been constructed.

Table 2.1.1-1 Existing and Future Land Use Development

Project Title	Project Description	Lead Agency	Project Status
CUSD Offices	Construction of government offices (125,000 gross square feet) at the southerly terminus of Valle Road from San Juan Creek Road.	CUSD	Complete
Pacifica San Juan-(SunCal)	Surrounding McCracken Hill and extending south to Camino Las Ramblas. Residential. 411 single-family and multifamily units.	San Juan Capistrano	Under construction
San Juan Meadows	La Novia Avenue. Residential. 196 single-family detached units, 79 single-family attached units, and 165 multifamily units.	San Juan Capistrano	Approved; not constructed
Serra Plaza	Del Obispo Street at Paseo Adelanto. Offices. 45,500 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete
Whispering Hills Estates Planned Community	Single-family dwelling units on the eastern edge of the City by La Pata Avenue.	San Juan Capistrano	Under construction
San Juan Hills High School	West of La Pata Road (Antonio Parkway) and north of San Juan Creek Road. Public high school. 2,000 students.	CUSD	Complete
Villa Montana Apartment Homes	10 ac of the Whispering Hills Estates site. 163-unit apartment development.	San Juan Capistrano	Under review
Junipero Serra Catholic High School	Junipero Serra Road and Camino Capistrano. Private high school. 2,200 students.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete
Honeyman Ranch: Rancho Madrina	Rancho Viejo Road. Residential estate homes. 119 single-family detached units.	San Juan Capistrano	Under construction
Ortega Ranch Offices	Rancho Viejo Road and Ortega Highway. 11-building office complex. 1512,72 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete
Mammoth Offices	Rancho Viejo Road at Via Escolar. 2-building office complex. 103,832 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete
Ortega Animal Hospital	Ortega Highway between Rancho Viejo Road and La Novia Avenue. Veterinary clinic and animal boarding. 7,767 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete
Reising Law Offices	Ortega Highway between Rancho Viejo Road and La Novia Avenue. Law offices. 5,963 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete

Table 2.1.1-1 Existing and Future Land Use Development (Continued)

Rancho Viejo Office Park	Rancho Viejo Road north of Spotted Bull Lane (east side). 47 percent medical office, 53 percent commercial office. 67,720 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Under review
Valle Ranch	South terminus of Valle Road. Offices. 44,400 gross square feet.	San Juan Capistrano	Complete
Belladonna Estates	Del Obispo Street. Residential custom lots (31).	San Juan Capistrano	Approved; not constructed
St. Margaret's Episcopal School Master Plan	Ortega Highway and La Novia Avenue. Church: 18,455 gross square feet. Performing arts center: 450 seats. Private school: 151 students.	San Juan Capistrano	Under review
M&M Petroleum	Ortega Highway and I-5 northbound on-ramp. Service station: 9 pumps. Convenience store: 5,940 gross square feet. Auto wash.	San Juan Capistrano	Under construction.
Rancho Mission Viejo Plan	RMV Planning Area (The Ranch Plan project) is a 22,815 ac property immediately east of the Cities of Mission Viejo and San Juan Capistrano in unincorporated Orange County. 14,000 dwelling units and 5.2 million square feet of retail and business uses on 5,842 gross acres; golf course uses on 25 gross acres, and open space on 16,942 ac Widening SR-74 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes within Planning Area 1.	County of Orange	Approved project; not constructed
Prima Deshecha Landfill Expansion	Increase disturbance area from 800 to 1,078 ac for landslide remediation features; redesign desilting system; supplement water supply in the Prima Deshecha Cañada stream channel; modify excavation-phasing limits for landslide remediation.	County of Orange	Approved June 2007 by County
San Juan Capistrano Ortega Highway Pipeline Project	Construction of approximately 5,287 linear feet of 12-inch diameter potable water main pipeline within the Ortega Highway right-of-way.	City of San Juan Capistrano	Initial Study/ Negative Declaration approved 12/24/07

Sources: City of San Juan Capistrano, 2008; County of Orange, 2008
ac = acre
CUSD = Capistrano Unified School District
I-5 = Interstate 5
RMV = Rancho Mission Viejo
SR-74 = State Route 74

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

City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan

In the immediate project area, the City General Plan designates the majority of land uses along SR-74 as residential. Within the limits of the project, residences on the north side of SR-74 are designated Very Low Density; residences on the south side of SR-74 are designated Medium, Medium Low Density, and Low Density. The City General Plan residential designations are described in Table 2.1.1-2.

Table 2.1.1-2 Residential Land Use Designations

Designation	Expected Dwelling Units per Acre[1]	Development Types
Very Low Density	0–1	Detached single-family dwellings, mobile and modular homes, second single-family units, guest-houses, and public facilities. Generally, Very Low Density residential developments occur in the hillside areas of the City.
Low Density	Up to 2	Detached single-family dwellings, mobile and modular homes, second single-family units, guest-houses, and public facilities.
Medium Low Density	Up to 3.5	Single-family dwellings, mobile and modular homes, second single-family units, guest-houses, churches, schools, family day care homes, and public facilities.
Medium Density	Up to 5	Single-family dwellings; mobile home parks; duplexes; multifamily dwellings including condominiums and townhomes; second single-family units; guest-houses; churches; schools; family day care homes; and public facilities.

Source: City of San Juan Capistrano Land Use Element.

1. Maximum densities of land use designation may be exceeded to complement the General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provision of Section 65915 of the California Government Code.

The Land Use Element of the San Juan Capistrano General Plan includes several related local plans and programs as listed below:

City of San Juan Capistrano Zoning Ordinance

The current Zoning Ordinance and associated zoning map were adopted in 1975. The ordinance has been continually updated to include changes to the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool used to implement the Land Use Element. This Ordinance, along with the Zoning Map, identifies land uses within the City.

Historic Town Center Master Plan

Developed by the City in 1995, this Plan sets forth goals and policies about how the General Plan should be implemented in the historic downtown area. The project site is not within the Historic Town Center.

Los Rios Precise Plan

This Plan was adopted in 1978 and outlines the specific planning needs of the historic Los Rios District. The project site is not located within the Los Rios District.

City of San Juan Capistrano Redevelopment Plan

The Redevelopment Plan was prepared in 1994 and updated in 1997 and is one of the many tools used to implement the policies within the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The project is not located within a redevelopment area.

Land Use Element

There are five major issues addressed in the goals, policies, and implementation actions of the City General Plan Land Use Element. The major issues are: (1) balancing land uses; (2) controlling and directing growth to maintain community character; (3) protecting open space; (4) promoting economic development; and (5) enhancing and preserving the character of existing neighborhoods. Each of these issues has one or more associated policies. Not all of the policies have the potential to be affected by the implementation of this project. Those that are applicable to the proposed project are listed below:

Land Use Goal 2: **Control and direct growth so that community character is preserved.**

Policy 2.2: Assure that new development is consistent and compatible with the existing character of the City.

Policy 2.3: Ensure that development corresponds to the provision of public facilities and services.

Land Use Goal 7: **Enhance and maintain the character of neighborhoods.**

Policy 7.1: Preserve and enhance the quality of San Juan Capistrano neighborhoods by avoiding or abating the intrusion of non-conforming buildings and uses.

Policy 7.2: Ensure that new development is compatible with the physical characteristics of its site, surrounding land uses, and available public infrastructure.

Policy 7.3: Utilize programs for rehabilitation of physical development, infrastructure and undergrounding of utilities within the City to improve community neighborhoods.

Circulation Element

The City Circulation Element guides the continued development and improvement of the circulation system to support existing and planned development. The development of additional land in the future will increase the demand for local and regional roadway improvements and construction. The Circulation Element establishes acceptable roadway service levels and identifies improvements required to maintain the service levels. The use of other modes of transportation such as transit, walking, bicycling, and riding is promoted to reduce the demand for transportation system improvements and to improve air quality. The purpose of the Circulation Element is to provide a safe, efficient, and adequate circulation system for the City. The City designates SR-74 (within the study area) as a Primary arterial highway (defined as a four-lane roadway with two lanes in each direction divided by a 14-inch raised median). A Primary arterial highway is a roadway "typically constructed within a right-of-way of 100 ft with a curb-to-curb pavement width of 70 ft. Primary arterial highways have a maximum capacity of 33,800 average daily trips and a peak hour capacity of 3,380 trips."

Applicable goals and policies are as follows:

Circulation Goal 1: Provide a system of roadways that meets the needs of the community.

Policy 1.1: Provide and maintain a City circulation system that is in balance with the land uses in San Juan Capistrano.

Policy 1.2: Implement the City's Master Plan of Streets and Highways.

Policy 1.3: Coordinate improvements to the City circulation system with other major transportation improvement programs.

Policy 1.4: Improve the San Juan Capistrano circulation system roadways in concert with land development to ensure sufficient levels of service.

Policy 1.5: Improve existing arterial system that serves regional circulation patterns in order to reduce local congestion (Ortega Highway at I-5).

Circulation Goal 3: Provide an extensive public bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails network.

Policy 3.1: Provide and maintain an extensive trails network that supports bicycles, pedestrians, and horses and is coordinated with those networks of adjacent jurisdictions.

Circulation Goal 4: Minimize the conflict between the automobile, commercial vehicles, pedestrians, horses, and bicycles.

Policy 4.1: Provide sufficient right-of-way widths along roadways to incorporate features that buffer pedestrians, horses, and bicycles from vehicular traffic.

Policy 4.2: Provide traffic management improvements within areas where through traffic creates public safety problems.

Policy 4.3: Install additional street improvements within areas where necessary to improve vehicular and non-vehicular safety.

County of Orange General Plan

East of the project limits, the County General Plan designates land uses along SR-74 as Suburban Residential, Open Space, and Urban Activity Center, as described below:

Suburban Residential

The land use designation of Suburban Residential is characterized by a wide range of housing types, from estates on large lots to attached dwelling units such as townhomes, condominiums, and clustered arrangements. The building intensity for Suburban Residential ranges from 0.5 to 18 dwelling units per acre.

Open Space

The land use designation of Open Space indicates the current and near-term use of the land. It is not necessarily an indication of a long-term commitment to open-space uses. Certain properties within the Open Space Category are committed, through public or private ownership, to remain as open space, but other properties, due to market pressures to serve a growing County population, may ultimately be developed in other ways.

Urban Activity Center

The land use designation of Urban Activity Center identifies locations intended for high-intensity mixed-use development. Appropriate land uses include but are not limited to residential, commercial, and office uses; industrial parks and materials

recovery/recycling facilities; civic, cultural, and educational uses; and childcare facilities.

Transportation Element

Transportation Element Goal 1: Provide a circulation plan that supports land use policies of the County.

Objective 1.1: Establish a circulation plan that accommodates the General Plan Land Use Element of the County

Objective 1.3: Develop a program to monitor highway conditions at intersections within the unincorporated areas to ensure that an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) is maintained

Policy 1.1: Implement the circulation plan in a manner that supports the implementation of adopted overall land use policies and which is consistent with financing capabilities

Policy 1.2: Apply conditions to the land use development projects to ensure that the direct and cumulative impacts of these projects are mitigated consistent with established level of service policies

Transportation Element Goal 2: Provide a circulation (arterial highway) plan that is integrated with that of adjacent jurisdictions

Policy 2.1: Coordinate with the following transportation planning agencies: the Department (State), Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), the Transportation Corridor Agencies (County corridor planning and construction) and Orange County cities on various studies relating to freeway, tollway and transportation corridor planning, construction and improvement in order to facilitate the planning and implementation of an integrated circulation system

Transportation Element Goal 3: Provide a circulation plan that facilitates the safe, convenient, and efficient movement of people and goods throughout unincorporated areas of the County

Policy 3.1: Maintain acceptable levels of service on arterial highways pursuant to the Growth Management Element of the General Plan

Policy 3.2: Ensure that all intersections within the unincorporated portion of Orange County maintain a peak hour level of service "D" according to the County Growth Management Plan Transportation Implementation Manual

Natural Community Conservation Plan

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) created the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) program, a cooperative effort with numerous private and public partners to protect habitats and species. The program began in 1991 under the State's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991 (NCCP Act). The NCCP is broader in its orientation and objectives than both the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). The NCCP takes an ecosystem approach to planning for the protection and perpetuation of biological diversity. The NCCP identifies and provides regional or areawide protection of plants, animals, and their habitats while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity.

The proposed Southern Subregion NCCP/Master Streambed Alteration Agreement (MSAA)/Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and its associated EIR/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) have been prepared by the County in cooperation with the CDFG and USFWS in accordance with the provisions of the NCCP Act, CESA, FESA, and Section 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code. The proposed Southern Subregion NCCP/MSAA/HCP would provide for the conservation of designated State- and federally listed and unlisted species and the associated habitats that are currently found within the 132,000-acre (ac) NCCP/MSAA/HCP study area (Southern Subregion) that encompasses the project study area.

On October 24, 2006, the County Board of Supervisors certified the FEIR for the NCCP/MSAA/HCP project. The USFWS distributed the Final EIS for public review on November 13, 2006. The Implementation Agreement (IA) was signed by the Participating Landowners (the County, Rancho Mission Viejo [RMV], and the Santa Margarita Water District [SMWD]) in December 2006. The USFWS signed the IA, approved the HCP, and issued Incidental Take Permits (ITPs) to each of the participating landowners on January 10, 2007. The Southern HCP assumes the Ranch Plan development. Coordination with CDFG on the NCCP/MSAA is ongoing.

SCAG Regional Plans

The SCAG is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for six counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Imperial. The region encompasses a population exceeding 15 million persons in an area of more than 38,000 square miles. As the designated MPO, SCAG is mandated by the federal government to research and draw up plans for transportation, growth management, hazardous waste management, and air quality. The leading activities SCAG undertakes that are applicable to this project include:

- Maintenance of a *continuous, comprehensive*, and *coordinated planning* process resulting in an RTP and an RTIP.
- Development of *demographic projections* plus the integrated land use, housing, employment, transportation programs, measures, and strategies portions of the South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), as well as serving as co-lead agency for *air quality planning* for the Central Coast and Southeast Desert air basin districts.
- Responsibility (under the Federal Clean Air Act) for determining conformity to the Air Plan of projects, plans, and programs.

SCAG has developed a number of plans to achieve its regional transportation and growth objectives. The most applicable of these regional objectives is the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG) that includes a Growth Management Chapter, the RTP, and the RTIP.

South Coast Air Quality Management Plan

The SCAQMD and SCAG are responsible for formulating and implementing the AQMP for the Basin. Every three years, the SCAQMD prepares a new AQMP, updating the previous plan and having a 20-year horizon. The SCAQMD adopted the 2003 AQMP in August 2003 and forwarded it to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for review and approval. CARB approved a modified version of the 2003 AQMP and forwarded it to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in October 2003 for review and approval.

The 2003 AQMP updates the attainment demonstration for the federal standards for ozone (O_3) and particulate matter (PM_{10}); replaces the 1997 attainment demonstration for the federal carbon monoxide (CO) standard and provides a basis for a maintenance plan for CO for the future; and updates the maintenance plan for the federal nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) standard that the Basin has met since 1992.

The 2003 AQMP proposes policies and measures to achieve federal and State standards for healthful air quality in the Basin.

This revision to the AQMP also addresses several State and federal planning requirements and incorporates significant new scientific data, primarily in the form of updated emissions inventories, ambient measurements, new meteorological episodes, and new air quality modeling tools. This AQMP is consistent with and builds upon the approaches taken in the 1997 AQMP and the 1999 Amendments to the O_3 State Implementation Plan (SIP) for the Basin for the attainment of the federal O_3 air quality standard. However, this revision points to the urgent need for additional emission reductions (beyond those incorporated in the 1997/1999 Plan) to offset increased emission estimates from mobile sources and meet all federal criteria pollutant standards within the time frames allowed under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA).

The SCAQMD is developing the 2007 AQMP, which is described as a regional and multiagency effort (SCAQMD Governing Board, CARB, SCAG, and the EPA). State and federal planning requirements will include developing control strategies, attainment demonstration, reasonable further progress, and maintenance plans. The 2007 AQMP also incorporates significant new scientific data, primarily in the form of updated emissions inventories, ambient measurements, new meteorological episodes, and new air quality modeling tools. The 2007 AQMP includes a request to have the Basin's federal 8-hour O_3 attainment status changed from severe to extreme. This change would extend the attainment deadline from 2021 to 2023. CARB approved the 2007 AQMP on September 27, 2007, and adopted it as part of the 2007 SIP. CARB has forwarded the 2007 SIP, which included the 2007 AQMP, to the EPA for its review and approval.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

The parks and recreational facilities within the project vicinity consist of neighborhood parks, community parks, joint-use parks, private parks and recreational facilities, community services and facilities, and a trail system.

The closest park to the SR-74 widening project area is Arroyo Park, a 3.6 ac park, which is located approximately 0.3 mi west of the project's westerly limit. The park is located at 31300 Sundance Drive. Due to the distance of the park from the closest project improvements, it would not be impacted by the proposed project either directly or indirectly.

The City has an extensive hiking, biking, and equestrian trail network. There are no existing bicycle facilities within the project limits. Outside of, but parallel to, the Project Limits are private equestrian trails identified as the East and West Hunt Club Trails located on the north side of SR-74. The existing East and West Hunt Club Trails, as well as the associated Hunt Club feeder trails located on the north side of SR-74 between the Hunt Club entrances, would be maintained. An additional recreational trail on the south side of SR-74 is identified as the Siega Trail and is located along Avenida Siega. The Siega Trail would also be maintained during the proposed project.

The purpose of the proposed project is to widen SR-74 to four lanes to relieve congestion and accommodate planned growth and development consistent with the County MPAH, the City's General Plan Circulation Element, and the STP. The existing trail system, which accommodates biking, hiking, and equestrian uses in the area, would be preserved. No modifications are proposed to the existing multi-use trails as part of the proposed project. There are no existing pedestrian or equestrian crosswalks within the project limits. However, there is an equestrian crosswalk located approximately 0.4 mi west of the western project limits at the intersection of Belford Drive and Ortega Highway. None of the intersections within the project limits meet signal warrants. Therefore, no pedestrian or equestrian crosswalks are proposed as part of this project. However, no existing equestrian crosswalks will be removed as part of the proposed project. If the newly constructed sidewalk occurs, it will be located on the north side of SR-74 east of Calle Entradero, and it will comply with the local plans and San Juan Capistrano General Plan.

2.1.1.4 Environmental Consequences

Existing land use impacts are discussed in Section 2.1.3, Community Impacts–Environmental Consequences.

Temporary Impacts

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative does not include any construction components. Since there are no anticipated changes to the existing land use, no temporary land use planning impacts to existing or future land uses would occur as a result of the No Build Alternative.

Build Alternatives 1 and 2

The Build Alternatives are not anticipated to impact land use designations and are consistent with General Plan and RTP goals and policies. Therefore, no temporary impacts would occur as a result of Build Alternatives 1 and 2.

Permanent Impacts

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative does not include any construction components, and thus is not anticipated to impact or change existing and/or future land use designations, policies, or conflict with the NCCP/MSAA/HCP program. It would not affect the regional growth projections adopted by SCAG. However, the project would not implement the improvements provided for in the RTP and RTIP, which in turn are part of the assumptions in the AQMP.

Long-term mobile emissions generated by vehicle trips would be greater under the No Build Alternative due to traffic congestion and reduced traffic flow in the project area. The AQMP would need to be modified to address the loss of this planned improvement.

The No Build Alternative would be inconsistent with the City General Plan and the OCTA MPAH, which identify SR-74 as a four-lane roadway through the project limits. The General Plan considers the approved land uses and regional traffic when designating the roadway classification to ensure compatibility between the Land Use Element and the Circulation Element.

The No Build Alternative would be inconsistent with the City's General Plan and the OCTA MPAH.

Build Alternatives 1 and 2

The proposed project is not anticipated to impact existing and/or future land use designations; be inconsistent with General Plan goals and policies; or conflict with the NCCP program, SCAG regional planning documents, or the AQMP. All of these planning programs assume the widening of SR-74 to four lanes to accommodate the existing and future development in the region. The proposed project occurs within the Southern HCP. However, the project does not traverse an area identified for preservation in the Southern HCP.

The project is consistent with the City's Long-Range Roadway Improvement goals, as included in the General Plan Circulation Element. The project is capacity

enhancing and would reduce existing traffic congestion and accommodate traffic associated with planned future development. Implementation of the proposed project would increase accessibility to properties adjacent to the project site due to a decrease in congestion and improved traffic flow on SR-74.

Within the study area, the proposed project is consistent with local regional comprehensive plans and is in compliance with standards and/or guidelines for resource protection. Design features such as Plexiglas noise barriers and retaining wall design options would help maintain the community's aesthetic elements. The design of the noise barriers and retaining walls would be based on input from the Department, the City, and the affected residents so that the walls comply with City policies and address the concerns of the community.

Throughout most of the proposed project length, a 5 ft paved shoulder will be provided on each side of the roadway to accommodate Class II (striped on-road) bicycle facilities. From Avenida Siega to the City/County limits, the shoulder/bike lane will transition to an 8 ft wide shoulder to merge with the County portion of the widening project.

The proposed minor partial property acquisitions would not result in significant impacts to the existing on-site uses. Sliver acquisitions from 10 parcels would be required. Given the small percentage of the overall parcel being affected, the continuation of the existing uses would not be adversely impacted. Alternative 2 would require slightly larger sliver acquisitions in some areas to accommodate the relocation of the existing sidewalk to the north. Regulations require fair market value be given for land and easements that are acquired by the Department for implementation of the project.

Given that the Build Alternatives are consistent with the General Plan and the OCTA MPAH and they would require minimal property acquisition, the land use effects of Build Alternatives 1 and 2 are considered less than significant.

2.1.1.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The Build Alternatives proposed for the lower SR-74 Widening Project are not expected to result in permanent or temporary impacts to existing and future planned land uses within the project limits. Therefore, no avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

2.1.1.6 Level of Significance

The No Build Alternative would be inconsistent with the City's General Plan and the OCTA MPAH; however, it would not affect use of land. The Build Alternatives are not expected to result in permanent indirect or direct impacts to existing and planned land uses. The land use impacts of the Build Alternatives are considered less than significant.