

# Chapter 1 Proposed Project

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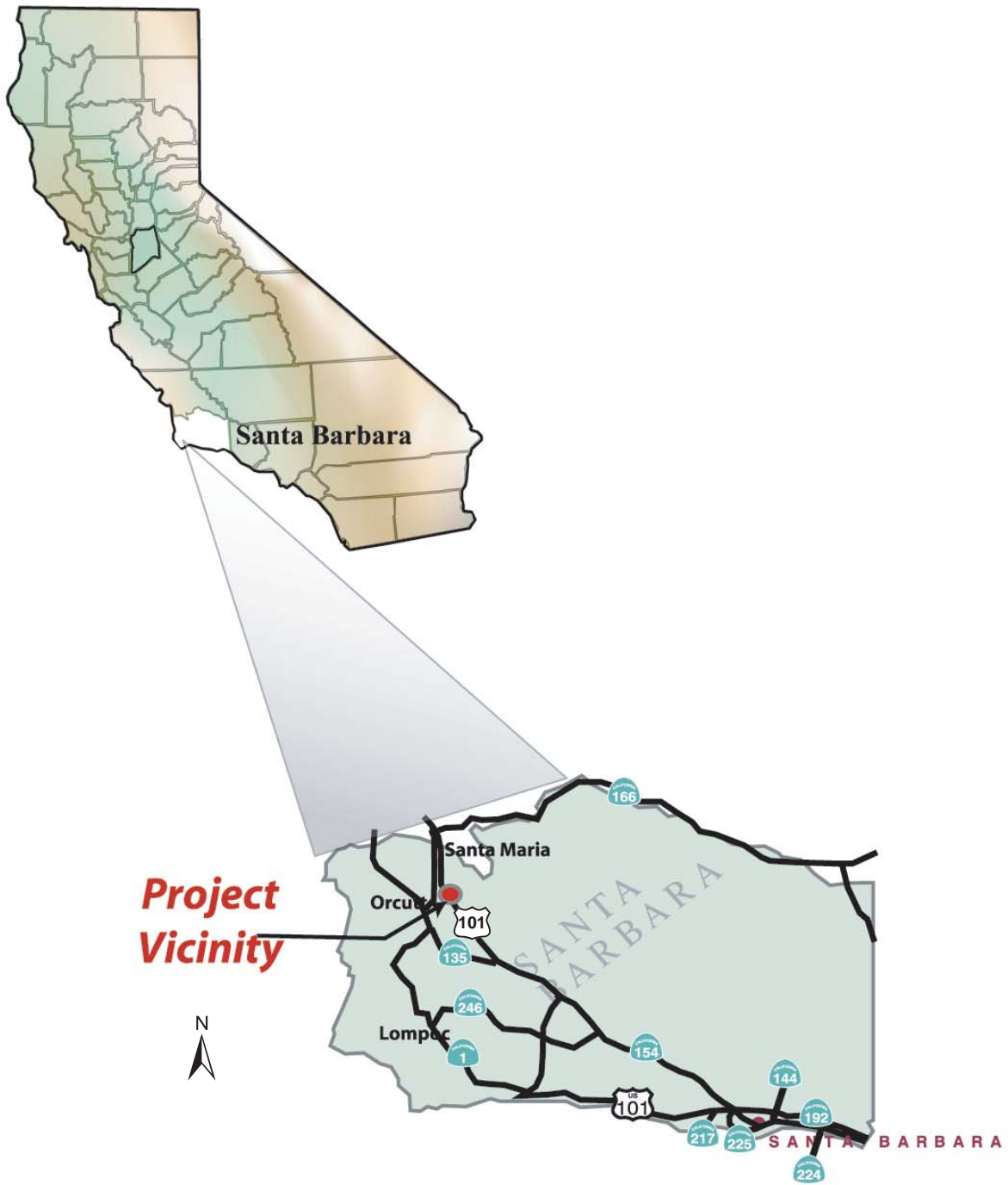
## 1.1 Introduction

Union Valley Parkway is currently a two-lane road with right-of-way for an additional two lanes from Hummel Drive east to within 600 feet of State Route 101. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the City of Santa Maria, in coordination with the County of Santa Barbara, are proposing to extend Union Valley Parkway west from Hummel Drive to Blosser Road (refer to Figures 1 and 2; note that all figures in this document are contained in Appendix F) and to construct an interchange at Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101. Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, is the National Environmental Policy Act Lead Agency. The City of Santa Maria is the California Environmental Quality Act Lead Agency.

The Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 interchange portion of the project is located on State Route 101 in the community of Orcutt, just south of the City of Santa Maria (City) in Santa Barbara County (County). It is about 7.5 miles south of the Santa Maria River, which separates Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. The interchange portion of the project runs from post miles 83.1 to 83.9 for a distance of about 0.8 mile on State Route 101.

The Union Valley Parkway Extension/Interchange Project is one of many roadway improvements identified within both the City and County circulation elements, and is included in the 2004 Federal Transportation Improvement Program. The interchange and landscaping portions of the project are included in the 2006 Santa Barbara County Regional Transportation Improvement Plan. It is also included in the 1999 Santa Barbara County Regional Transportation Plan.

A mixture of mostly undeveloped land, residences, and institutional uses are located adjacent to the project area. A residential area is located along the southern portion of the roadway extension section between Blosser Road and Foxenwood Lane. Several homes are also located on the east side of Orcutt Road. The City and County circulation elements identify the Union Valley Parkway extension as a future circulation improvement.

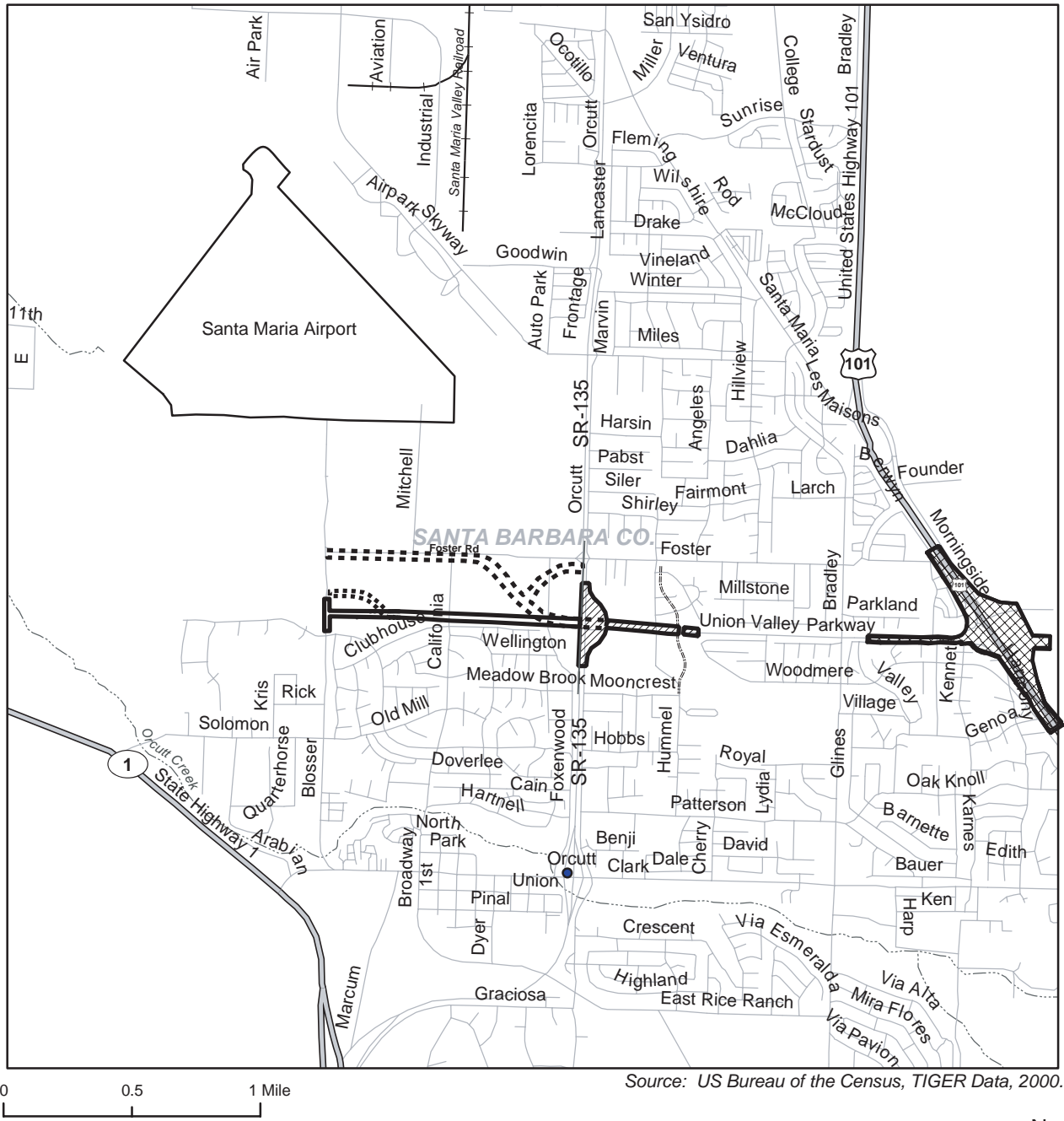







Source: Caltrans, July 2002

Project Vicinity

Figure 1

Union Valley Parkway Extension/Interchange EA/EIR



- Legend**
-  Locally Preferred Alignment Location
  -  Foster Road Alignment Location
  -  Reduced Extension Location
  -  Curved Alignment Location
  -  Interchange Location (all Alternatives)

**Regional Location**

Figure 2

The project area for the Union Valley Parkway extension portion of the project includes a total of approximately 56 acres. The roadway extension portion of the project would extend east to west along a line approximately 1.6 miles in length. A portion of the project area (approximately 29.3 acres) would fall under the jurisdiction of the City of Santa Maria, while a smaller portion (approximately 26.7 acres) would lie within the community of Orcutt, which is under the jurisdiction of Santa Barbara County.

### **Project History**

Santa Barbara County had proposed a project to extend Union Valley Parkway east and construct southbound freeway on- and off-ramps to State Route 101. This project was originally scheduled for construction in 1997–1998. Fill was placed and rough grading occurred for the parkway extension (as far as the southbound freeway ramps intersection) and for the southbound ramps as part of the Edgewood and Creekside residential developments west of the freeway.

The County had proposed another project to be constructed after extending the parkway to the east and constructing the southbound freeway on- and off-ramps. This project would have extended Union Valley Parkway from the then-existing parkway/southbound ramps intersection east to State Route 101 and constructed an overcrossing and northbound freeway on- and off-ramps. In 1998, this project was programmed for construction in 2002–2003 in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan.

The City and County had also proposed a project to extend Union Valley Parkway about 2,000 feet west of its present end at Hummel Drive to intersect State Route 135 (Orcutt Expressway) and then continue west to Blosser Road.

In March 1999, the County, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, and Caltrans agreed that both of the proposed improvements at the Union Valley Parkway extension/State Route 101 interchange — either the southbound ramps or the overcrossing and northbound ramps — were not crucial to regional traffic until the connection of Union Valley Parkway and State Route 135 was constructed. In 2003, the Federal Highway Administration subsequently determined that the Union Valley Parkway extension between Hummel Drive and Blosser Road, and the Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 interchange did not have independent utility. A project is considered to have independent utility if it would be constructed absent the construction of other projects in the vicinity. The Union Valley Parkway extension

would be a multi-phase project where each portion would depend upon other phases and therefore would not have independent utility. Because of this, it was then proposed to combine the extension of Union Valley Parkway and Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 interchange components as a single project.

## 1.2 Purpose and Need

This section identifies and describes the purpose and need of the project by providing background information and evaluating the existing and future conditions of the study area in relation to area development and adopted level of service standards. In addition, it identifies the specific deficiencies along the study area.

### 1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to achieve the following goals:

- To transfer through-vehicle trips to the regional highway system and facilitate the efficient flow of people, goods, and services through this area, ensuring continued mobility of the public.
- To provide congestion relief to improve traffic flow on the regional transportation system.
- To be consistent with existing and planned local development.

### 1.2.2 Need

#### ***Transfer Through-Vehicle Trips to the Regional Highway System***

The Union Valley Parkway extension/interchange is intended to provide transportation system linkages and improve the transportation system interface with the Santa Maria Public Airport, which is located approximately 0.75 mile north of the Union Valley Parkway extension site. The project would improve access between the airport and State Route 101.

The project would transfer through trips to the regional highway system by providing east/west access between State Route 135 and State Route 101, and between State Route 135 and Blosser Road. This would facilitate through-trip access to the regional highway system by travelers from Santa Maria to the north and the community of Orcutt to the south.

The City of Santa Maria General Plan identifies the Union Valley Parkway as a major arterial for the community. The existing General Plan Circulation Element depicts

Union Valley Parkway as extending between State Routes 101 and 1 as a future circulation improvement. The Union Valley Parkway extension and interchange would help meet an objective of the Circulation Element “to provide for public mobility and access necessary to support the existing and anticipated population of the City.” The extension and interchange are also identified as planned and/or programmed improvements in the 1999 Santa Barbara County Regional Transportation Plan. Although the project could be considered a connecting link of the Union Valley Parkway corridor west of Blosser Road, as identified in the City’s General Plan Circulation Element, portions of the corridor are located within the jurisdiction of the County of Santa Barbara, and the implementation of this portion of the corridor is beyond the City’s control. The 1999 Santa Barbara County Regional Transportation Plan does not include the extension of Union Valley Parkway west of Blosser Road. In addition, the City is considering an amendment to its Circulation Element to end Union Valley Parkway at Blosser Road. The amendment would be approved in tandem with the proposed project.

***Congestion Relief and Future Travel Demand***

The Union Valley Parkway extension/interchange is also intended to satisfy regional Congestion Management Program objectives. It should be noted that financial penalties (such as loss of Section 2105 funds and inability to program new Regional Surface Transportation Program/Congestion Management Air Quality funds in future programming cycles) occur if a local agency either does not participate or does not properly implement the Congestion Management Program. Exceeding the Congestion Management Program Level of Service standard would trigger the need for the affected agency/agencies to develop a Congestion Management Program deficiency plan specific to the problem location, which would result in costs related to developing the deficiency plan and garnering the funds to implement the identified improvements in the plan.

An analysis was prepared to determine when existing roadways and intersections would exceed adopted Level of Service thresholds if the improvements were not constructed. The ability of a roadway to accommodate traffic is typically measured in terms of Level of Service. Based on the ratio of traffic volume to roadway capacity, Level of Service is expressed as a range from A (free traffic flow with low volumes) to F (indicates stop-and-go traffic and delay).

The analysis found that several key regional roadways would degrade to Level of Service D, E, or F within the 20-year horizon period. As shown in Table 1-1, the Foster

Road/State Route 135 intersection degraded to Level of Service D in 2008, the State Route 101/Santa Maria Way interchange would degrade to Level of Service D in 2010, and the State Route 101/Clark Avenue interchange would degrade to Level of Service D in the 2011 to 2014 period.

It should be noted that the reduction in level of service at the intersection of Foster Road/State Route 135 is due to background traffic growth in the area, and represents an update to existing conditions. The Union Valley Parkway traffic study had previously projected a level of service D at this intersection in 2008, which is now anticipated to have been reached. This reduction in level of service is not due to implementation of the proposed project.

**Table 1-1 No-Action Alternative: Timing of Level of Service Deficiencies at Key Intersections**

Intersection	Existing LOS	Design Year Level of Service (LOS)	Timing of Deficiency	
			Year	LOS
Foster/State Route 135	C <u>D</u>	D	2008	LOS D
Santa Maria Way/State Route 101 southbound	C	D	2010	LOS D
Clark Ave/State Route 101 southbound <sup>a</sup>	A	A <u>D</u>	2014	LOS D

<sup>a</sup> Levels of service assume Orcutt Transportation Improvement Plan (Santa Barbara County Public Works Department, May 1996) improvements.

Source: Traffic Study, 2008.

There would also be a greater increase in traffic and congestion on the surface street system in the area west of State Route 101. The additional traffic on State Route 135 would result in a less than acceptable Level of Service F. Table 1-2 shows the future increase in traffic volumes on state routes without the project.

**Table 1-2 No-Action Alternative: Traffic Volume Increases on State Routes**

State Route	Existing Volume (Average Daily Trips)	Design Year Volume (Average Daily Trips)	Percent Increase
State Route 101 Between Clark Avenue and Santa Maria Way	38,000	57,600	52%
State Route 135 South of Foster Road	19,300	25,900	34%

Source: Traffic Study, 2008.

As shown in Table 1-3, Santa Maria-Orcutt Traffic Model forecasts produced for existing and future conditions in the study area demonstrate that substantial future traffic increases would occur on Clark Avenue, Foster Road, and the interchange with State Route 101 at Clark Avenue. The traffic forecasts for Foster Road indicate that a four-lane roadway would be required west of State Route 135. Additional capacity would also be required at the Foster Road/State Route 135 intersection to maintain Level of Service C-D operations.

**Table 1-3 No-Action Alternative: Traffic Volume Increases on Local Roadway Segments**

Roadway Segment	Existing Volume (Average Daily Traffic)	Design Year Volume (Average Daily Traffic)	Level of Service (LOS) Deficiency
Foster Road East of State Route 135	7,400	13,800	LOS E at Foster Road/State Route 135
Clark Avenue East of Bradley Road	18,300	31,900	LOS D at Clark Avenue/State Route 101 Southbound Ramps

Source: Traffic Study, 2008.

Development envisioned in the City of Santa Maria General Plan, the Santa Maria Research Park Specific Plan, the Richards Specific Plan, and the Orcutt Community Plan will generate traffic demands on the area’s circulation network and will require a transportation infrastructure capable of safely and efficiently accommodating those traffic demands. The Union Valley Parkway extension/interchange is one of several planned circulation improvements designed to achieve desired circulation levels.

The existing Union Valley Parkway is considered inadequate to serve anticipated future traffic needs. Without the proposed Union Valley Parkway extension/interchange and other public roadway and intersection improvements, future development envisioned in the City of Santa Maria General Plan, Santa Maria Research Park Specific Plan, Richards Specific Plan, or Orcutt Community Plan could not be accommodated within the circulation system. As described in the traffic analysis, construction of the proposed Union Valley Parkway extension/interchange would be necessary to achieve and maintain desired circulation levels of service and to alleviate traffic congestion in the Santa Maria-Orcutt area.

### **1.3 Logical Termini**

Logical termini criteria are applied to a project to ensure that (1) the proposed project would have independent utility or work well without the need for additional projects, (2) environmental issues are considered on a broad scale, and (3) the relationship of the proposed project to potential future projects would not preclude opportunities to avoid environmental resources.

#### **Independent Utility**

The most common termini that provide independent utility are intersecting roadways. This is because in most cases projected traffic volumes determine the size and type of roadway being proposed. The intersection of Blosser Road/Union Valley Parkway and State Route 101/Union Valley Parkway would be considered logical termini for the project, as this reach of roadway extension and interchange construction would sufficiently address the identified project objectives. As shown in Section 2.1.6 (Traffic), the project would satisfy traffic demand through the planning horizon year 2030. In addition, there is a large drop-off in traffic volume projected for 2030 in the segment west of Blosser Road, which further confirms Blosser Road as a logical end-point (see Figure 12A in Appendix F). The proposed State Route 101 freeway interchange would also provide for satisfactory operation through 2030.

#### **Broad Look at Environmental Issues**

Discussions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have considered habitat for the California tiger salamander (a federal threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act and a state Species of Concern under the California Endangered Species Act). This habitat is generally in the area north and west of the proposed State Route 135/Union Valley Parkway intersection (refer to Section 2.3.5 of this document and Figure 30 in Appendix F). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has expressed support for having Union Valley Parkway terminate at Blosser Road to protect breeding ponds and nearby farmland used by the salamanders.

The City of Santa Maria has taken several steps to protect the population of salamanders west of Blosser Road. For example, the City of Santa Maria recently protected the salamanders in this area as part of the Santa Maria Airport Business Park Specific Plan. In addition to direct protection of the salamanders, the traffic and circulation portion of the plan is based on the termination of Union Valley Parkway at Blosser Road. The City's recently proposed Downtown Specific Plan would increase the number of residential units in the downtown area to relieve growth pressure on

urban fringe “greenfields” to protect biological resource areas, such as the salamander habitat west of Blosser Road.

Not only do traffic numbers indicate that Blosser Road is the logical terminus for the west end of the project, but also consideration of environmental issues on a broad scale. Similarly, environmental resources including oil, farmland, and salamander habitat exist to the east of State Route 101, reinforcing the project’s eastern terminus.

### **Protection of Resources from Potential Future Projects**

Because project alternatives would provide transportation improvements that satisfy traffic demand through 2030 and because environmental issues were considered on a broad scale, the design alternatives for the termini at Blosser Road and U.S. 101 could be developed to provide maximum protection of environmental resources should extensions of Union Valley Parkway be considered in the future.

## **1.4 Alternatives**

As required by Section 15126.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.9(b), and the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans guidelines, this Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment examines a range of reasonable alternatives that could feasibly achieve similar objectives. Since the project involves extending an existing road and constructing an interchange, alternatives that are available to accomplish the project objectives are relatively limited. Criteria used to select the alternatives under consideration included the following: ability to achieve the project objectives, cost, protection of the environment (including endangered species), and the amount of physical constraints.

The Union Valley Parkway extension alignment alternatives analyzed in this document include the “Locally Preferred Alignment” Alternative 1, “Curved Alignment” Alternative 2, “Foster Road Alignment” Alternative 3, “Reduced Extension” Alternative 4, and “No-Action” Alternative 5. These Union Valley Parkway extension alignment alternatives are depicted on Figure 6 (A-D) in Appendix F and are described in detail below. A comparison summary of the alternatives is provided in Table 1-5.

## 1.4.1 Build Alternatives

### Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives

#### *Union Valley Parkway Extension*

The project would initially construct the extension of Union Valley Parkway with two through lanes with right-of-way reserved for a future four-lane arterial road. Proposed improvements would include the construction of an interchange at State Route 101, and at-grade intersections with traffic signals at State Route 135 (in Phase I), Orcutt Road (in Phase II), Hummel Drive, Foxenwood Lane, and California Boulevard (at buildout). The road would include provisions for a Class II bikeway and a multipurpose trail. In addition, a portion of Orcutt Road would be realigned and connected with Union Valley Parkway.

The City is considering an amendment to its Circulation Element to end Union Valley Parkway at Blosser Road. The amendment would be approved in tandem with the proposed project.

#### *Landscaping Transportation Enhancement Component*

All of the build alternatives, except the Reduced Extension Alternative, which would not extend Union Valley Parkway west of State Route 135, and the Foster Road Alignment Alternative, would include the Union Valley Parkway Landscaping Transportation Enhancement component, which would landscape the alignment between Foxenwood Lane and California Boulevard. This component would include soil preparation, planting of trees, vines, and shrubs, an irrigation system, bike path signage, and bollards. Native, drought-tolerant plant materials, including native trees and groundcovers, would be planted. The proposed multi-purpose trail/bike path would meander through the landscaped area. Clinging vines would be planted to cling to the proposed masonry soundwall. The landscaped area would total about 0.2 acre.

#### *Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 Interchange*

All of the build alternatives would extend Union Valley Parkway east to intersect with State Route 101 about midway between the State Route 101/Clark Avenue and State Route 101/Santa Maria Way interchanges. The new interchange would be constructed in one of three potential configurations to be determined by Caltrans (refer to Figures 7 A-C). There, an overcrossing with north- and southbound freeway ramps would be constructed. The work would stretch along Union Valley Parkway from its present eastern end, about 600 feet west of State Route 101, to the proposed parkway/northbound freeway ramps intersection, about 600 feet east of State Route

101. Union Valley Parkway would not be extended east of the proposed parkway/northbound ramps intersection with this project.

Each of the build alternatives would extend Union Valley Parkway about 600 feet east to State Route 101 and construct an overcrossing to carry the parkway over the freeway. The overcrossing would be a three-lane concrete bridge consisting of one westbound and one eastbound 12-foot lane, one 12-foot striped median with a left-turn pocket, two 8-foot Class II bike lanes/shoulders, and a 6.5-foot sidewalk on the eastbound (south) side. The Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 southbound ramp intersection would have a free-flow lane for the State Route 101 southbound off-ramp to Union Valley Parkway westbound movement. The southbound and northbound ramps would be provided with necessary provisions for future traffic signals. The Union Valley Parkway/Boardwalk Lane intersection would be configured for right turns only (inbound and outbound). The overcrossing would be constructed to accommodate widening State Route 101 from four to six lanes in the future without modifications to the structure.

The three potential interchange configurations are shown on Figures 7A, 7B, and 7C in Appendix F, and are summarized as follows:

### **Interchange Design Variation 1**

This interchange design variation proposes a spread diamond interchange with a bridge 228 feet in length (see Figure 7A). It would accommodate a future northbound loop on-ramp from eastbound Union Valley Parkway. The proposed bridge would be constructed at a 90-degree angle to State Route 101. The distance between the Santa Maria interchange and the proposed interchange is 0.9 mile. A bigger right-of-way take for a drainage basin east of Route 101 is required to accommodate the excess runoff from the west side of Route 101.

The spread diamond interchange allows more vehicles to line up to make left turns on the overcrossing. Also, its flexible design would easily allow any future construction of loop ramps that would be required to accommodate future development on the east side of the interchange site.

### **Interchange Design Variation 2**

This design variation proposes a modified spread diamond interchange with a bridge approximately 265.8 feet in length (see Figure 7B). It provides room for a future northbound slip ramp from eastbound Union Valley Parkway. The proposed bridge

would be constructed at a 29.25-degree angle to State Route 101. This angle would also align with existing property lines on the east side of the interchange. A bigger right-of-way acquisition for a drainage basin at the northeast quadrant is required to accommodate the excess runoff from the west side of Route 101.

### Interchange Design Variation 3

This design variation proposes a modified spread diamond interchange with the northbound on-ramp being a loop ramp (see Figure 7C). The bridge length for this alternative would be 228 feet. The proposed bridge would be constructed at a 90-degree angle to State Route 101. A bigger right-of-way acquisition for a drainage basin at the southeast quadrant of State Route 101 is required to accommodate the excess runoff from the west side of State Route 101.

Table 1-4 below illustrates the similarities and differences of the three interchange design variations. The amount of ground disturbance and the associated environmental effects are essentially the same for each of the three potential interchange configurations.

**Table 1-4 Comparison of Interchange Design Variations (IDV)**

Interchange Design Variations (IDV)		IDV 1	IDV 2	IDV 3
Over-crossing Width	Overall	60.1 feet	60.1 feet	60.1 feet
	Lanes	12-foot	12-foot	12-foot
	Bike Lane/Shoulder	8-foot	8-foot	8-foot
	Sidewalk	6.5-foot	6.5-foot	6.5-foot
Overcrossing Length		228.03 feet	265.76 feet	228.03 feet
Overcrossing's Angle with Route 101		90 degrees	29.25 degrees	90 degrees
Right-of-Way Required		884,268 square feet	884,268 square feet	884,268 square feet
Type Interchange		Spread Diamond	Modified Spread Diamond	Modified Spread Diamond
On-and Off-ramps	Overall Width <sup>1</sup>	24 feet	24 feet	24 feet
	Lanes	12-foot	12-foot	12-foot
	Inside Shoulders	4-foot	4-foot	4-foot
	Outside Shoulders	8-foot	8-foot	8-foot
	Length	1,000-1,475 feet	1,150-1,475 feet	1,000-1,475 feet
Distance from Santa Maria Way Interchange		.89 mile	.93 mile	.89 mile

**Table 1-4 Comparison of Interchange Design Variations (IDV)**

<b>Interchange Design Variations (IDV)</b>	<b>IDV 1</b>	<b>IDV 2</b>	<b>IDV 3</b>
Distance from Clark Ave. Interchange	1.29 miles	1.24 mile	1.29 miles
Current Cost Estimate	\$30,183,000	\$25,043,000	\$28,863,000
Effective in Meeting Project Purpose	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flexibility to Accommodate Future Growth East of State Route 101	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relationship to Adjacent Property Lines	Does Not Match Property Lines	Matches Property Lines	Does Not Match Property Lines

<sup>1</sup> Some ramps are 12 feet wider near the ramp/Union Valley Parkway intersections to accommodate an additional merging and turning lane.

***Unique Features of the Build Alternatives***

***Locally Preferred Alignment***

The Locally Preferred Alignment is located in northern Santa Barbara County, within the City of Santa Maria and the unincorporated community of Orcutt. The project area is located south of the Santa Maria Airport and is generally bounded by Foster Road to the north, State Route 101 to the east, the Foxenwood Estates and other residential development to the south, and Blosser Road to the west.

The project area for the Union Valley Parkway extension portion of the project includes a total of approximately 56.0 acres. The roadway extension portion of the project would extend east to west along a line approximately 1.6 miles in length. A portion of the project area (approximately 29.3 acres) would fall under the jurisdiction of the City of Santa Maria while a portion (approximately 26.7 acres) would lie within the community of Orcutt, which is under the jurisdiction of Santa Barbara County. Figures 1 and 2 show the site’s regional location within northern Santa Barbara County. The proposed improvements are shown on an aerial photograph on Figure 4. Preliminary Improvement Plan sheets for Union Valley Parkway from Blosser Road to Hummel Drive are provided in Figures 5A through 5I in Appendix F. The Locally Preferred Alignment, Alternative 1, follows a relatively straight alignment between Hummel Drive and Blosser Road

An 8-foot-high masonry soundwall would be installed north of the rear lot lines of 19 Foxenwood Subdivision homes on Clubhouse Drive, between California Boulevard and Foxenwood Lane (refer to Figure 22A in Appendix F).

### *Curved Alignment Alternative*

The Curved Alignment, Alternative 2, presents an alternative alignment for the proposed roadway that was formulated after receiving public testimony and input from traffic experts. This alternative would generally follow a straight alignment from Foxenwood Lane to California Boulevard; however, the western portion of the Curved Alignment, near Blosser Road, would be designed with a curve to avoid an existing area of eucalyptus woodland (refer to Figure 6B in Appendix F).

An 8-foot-high masonry soundwall would be installed north of the rear lot lines of 19 Foxenwood Subdivision homes on Clubhouse Drive, between California Boulevard and Foxenwood Lane (refer to Figure 22A in Appendix F).

### *Foster Road Alignment*

In general the Foster Road Alignment, Alternative 3, would follow the same alignment as Foster Road from Blosser Road to California Boulevard. From California Boulevard, the alternative alignment would run diagonally (southeast) to State Route 135, with a realigned roadway that forks northeast toward the intersection of Foster Road and State Route 135 (refer to Figure 6C in Appendix F).

This alternative would require the widening of Foster Road and capacity improvements at the Foster Road/State Route 135 intersection, as well as street system modifications within the Santa Maria Research Park Specific Plan area.

### *Reduced Extension Alternative*

The Reduced Extension, Alternative 4, presents an alternative Union Valley Parkway extension length for the proposed roadway that was formulated after receiving public testimony and input from traffic experts. This alternative extends between Hummel Drive and State Route 135, realigns Orcutt Road and includes an at-grade “T” intersection with a traffic signal at State Route 135 (refer to Figure 6D in Appendix F).

### **Construction Phasing**

The City proposes to construct the Union Valley Parkway extension portion of the project in several phases and the Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 interchange portion of the project in a single phase. The timing of the construction of the Union Valley Parkway extension portion of the project relative to the interchange portion of the project is not known, but will depend upon the availability and timing of funding. The interchange portion of the project is not currently fully funded. If full funding is available, interchange construction would commence in 2011/2012.

Phase 1 of the Union Valley Parkway extension portion of the project (Hummel Drive to Blosser Road) would entail the development of a two-lane Union Valley Parkway from State Route 135 to Blosser Road. Phase 2 would entail the development of Union Valley Parkway as a two-lane roadway between State Route 135 and Hummel Drive. The final phase of the Locally Preferred Alignment, Curved Alignment, and Foster Road Alignment would include widening Union Valley Parkway between Hummel Drive and Blosser Road to a total of four lanes. The Reduced Extension Alternative would widen Union Valley Parkway between Hummel Drive and State Route 135 to four lanes during the final phase. This final phase would be developed in response to changing traffic conditions. Sidewalks, bikeways, and a multi-purpose trail would be provided during each phase.

As part of the Union Valley Parkway extension portion of the project, approximately 2,000 feet of Orcutt Road would be realigned eastward from its current location. The realigned Orcutt Road would intersect the new Union Valley Parkway roadway roughly 535 feet east of State Route 135. The realigned portion of Orcutt Road would feature a total of two 12-foot lanes with 6-foot Class II bike lanes, curb and gutter, and a 5-foot sidewalk on each side of the road. The Orcutt Road realignment would be necessary to alleviate potential traffic problems associated with having two intersections (State Route 135/Union Valley Parkway and Orcutt Road/Union Valley Parkway) in close proximity to one another.

During each phase of the Union Valley Parkway Extension/Interchange Project, State Route 135 would be widened to provide left-turn lanes onto Union Valley Parkway. In addition, acceleration and deceleration lanes would be provided both north and south of Union Valley Parkway, and Blosser Road would be widened to allow left-turn lanes onto Union Valley Parkway. It should be noted that for the purposes of this Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the environmental analysis is based on the final four-lane build-out scenario for the City portions of the extension, and a two-lane build-out scenario for the future County portion of the extension (i.e., between Hummel Drive and State Route 101), with implementation of the Union Valley Parkway/State Route 101 interchange.

#### **1.4.2 No-Action Alternative**

Under the No-Action Alternative, Alternative 5, the proposed Union Valley Parkway extension/interchange would not be implemented and the project area would remain undeveloped. The No-Action Alternative would not provide access to Union Valley

Parkway from State Route 101. Union Valley Parkway would not be extended between State Routes 101 and 135 to Blosser Road, although routine maintenance would continue on both State Route 101 and Union Valley Parkway. The No-Action Alternative would result in traffic congestion at several locations in the study area, including at the intersections of Foster Road/State Route 135, Santa Maria Way/State Route 101 southbound, and Clark Avenue/State Route 101 southbound. Therefore, this alternative would not meet the project purpose of transferring through-vehicle trips to the regional highway system to facilitate the efficient flow of people, goods, and services through this area, ensuring continued mobility of the public. It would also not meet the project purpose of providing congestion relief to improve traffic flow on the regional transportation system and accommodate projected travel demand. The No-Action Alternative would require a reconfiguration of the Santa Maria Way/State Route 101 interchange, realignment of the frontage road east of that interchange, construction of a standard intersection, and installation of traffic signals at the southbound off-ramp to maintain a Level of Service of C in the future.

### **1.4.3 Comparison of Alternatives**

An environmental comparison of the build alternatives is provided below and in Table 1-5. Refer to Table ES-1 in the Summary for a comparison of the environmental effects of the alternatives.

#### *Locally Preferred Alignment*

After comparing and weighing the benefits and impacts of all of the feasible alternatives, the City has identified the Locally Preferred Alignment.

#### *Curved Alignment Alternative*

The Curved Alignment Alternative would result in greater noise impacts on the public park (Pioneer Park) north of the alignment, but reduced noise impacts on residential and private recreational uses south of the alignment (refer to Figure 5A for the location of Pioneer Park). Impacts associated with transportation/circulation would be similar to the Locally Preferred Alignment. Pioneer Park is a 15-acre public park, zoned by the City of Santa Maria as Public Facilities, which includes a large picnic area, barbecue facilities, a pavilion, softball field, children's playground, and horseshoe pits. The Curved Alignment was designed to avoid impacts to a stand of eucalyptus trees that the Locally Preferred Alignment does not avoid. However, the Curved Alignment would actually remove more area of central dune scrub habitat (11.9 acres) than the Locally-Preferred Alignment would (10.6 acres). In addition, the

Curved Alignment Alternative could result in additional growth inducement impacts on natural communities west of Blosser Road should Union Valley Parkway ever be extended in that area, due to the northward curve of the alignment, which would extend further from existing urban development to the south.

#### *Foster Road Alignment*

When compared to the Locally Preferred Alignment, impacts associated with noise under the Foster Road Alignment were generally considered to be less severe than the Locally Preferred Alignment. Impacts associated with transportation/circulation, land use, and biological resources would be greater than the Locally Preferred Alignment.

#### *Reduced Extension Alternative*

The Reduced Extension Alternative would result in less physical disturbance and associated impacts (such as to biological resources, etc.) when compared to the Locally Preferred Alignment. However, impacts on transportation and circulation and associated air contaminant emissions would be substantially greater than the Locally Preferred Alignment, and this alternative would only partially implement the project objectives.

#### *No-Action Alternative*

The No-Action Alternative would not meet the project's basic objectives of facilitating smooth and efficient movement of persons and goods within the communities of Santa Maria and Orcutt. Although adverse impacts to biological and/or aesthetics/visual resources would not occur, impacts to transportation/circulation and air quality would be expected to steadily increase due to less efficient traffic circulation and a corresponding increase in vehicle miles traveled and air contaminant emissions.

**Table 1-5 Comparison of Alternatives Table**

Potential Impact	Locally Preferred Alignment Alternative (Alternative 1)	Curved Alignment Alternative (Alternative 2)	Foster Road Alignment Alternative (Alternative 3)	Reduced Extension Alternative (Alternative 4)	No-Action Alternative
<b>Pedestrian and Bicycle Access</b>	Since this alternative includes sidewalks, multi-use paths, and Class II bike lanes, it would improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation.	Since this alternative includes sidewalks, multi-use paths, and Class II bike lanes, it would improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation.	Since this alternative includes sidewalks, multi-use paths, and Class II bike lanes, it would improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation.	Although this alternative includes sidewalks, multi-use paths, and Class II bike lanes, it would not improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation to the west of State Route 135.	No improvement to pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
<b>Right-of-Way Impacts</b>	Based on the City and County's approved general plans, the right-of-way is protected for this alternative. This alternative would have impacts to residential properties along Union Valley Parkway east of State Route 135. However, no relocations would be required.	Based on the City and County's approved general plans, the right-of-way is protected for this alternative. This alternative would have impacts to residential properties along Union Valley Parkway east of State Route 135. However, no relocations would be required.	This alternative would have impacts to residential properties along Union Valley Parkway east of State Route 135. Based on the current land uses along the diagonal alignment west of State Route 135, there are direct impacts to properties and facilities for this alternative such as the County's animal shelter and the administration building, which would require relocation.	Based on the City and County's approved general plans, the right-of-way is protected for this alternative. This alternative would have impacts to residential properties along Union Valley Parkway east of State Route 135. However, no relocations would be required.	This alternative would not have any right-of-way impacts.
<b>Natural Communities</b>	Impact to 1.67 acres coast live oak woodland, 9 acres eucalyptus woodland, and 11.31 acres central dune scrub.	This alternative would affect an area of eucalyptus woodlands (7.19 acres) and central dune scrub (13.07 acres). It would remove an area of oak woodlands (0.71 acre).	No oak woodland affected. Impact to 5.51 acres eucalyptus woodland and 10.52 acres central dune scrub.	No oak woodland affected. Impact to 3.91 acres eucalyptus woodland and 9.87 acres central dune scrub.	No impact
<b>Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.</b>	Impact to 1.70 acres of Cowardin wetlands. About 0.35 acre of Corps jurisdiction affected.	Impact to 1.67 acres of Cowardin wetlands. About 0.35 acre of Corps jurisdiction affected.	Impact to 1.67 acres of Cowardin wetlands. About 0.35 acres of Corps jurisdiction impacted.	Impact to 1.67 acres of Cowardin wetlands. About 0.35 acres of Corps jurisdiction impacted.	No impact
<b>Threatened and Endangered Species</b>	Impacts to 2.59 acres of upland habitat and 19.65 acres of dispersal habitat for the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog.	Impacts to 3.04 acres of upland habitat and 17.36 acres of dispersal habitat for the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog.	Impacts to 5.82 acres of upland habitat and 10.20 acres of dispersal habitat for the California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog.	Potential impact to California tiger salamander and red-legged frog.	No Impact

**Table 1-5 Comparison of Alternatives Table**

<b>Potential Impact</b>	<b>Locally Preferred Alignment Alternative (Alternative 1)</b>	<b>Curved Alignment Alternative (Alternative 2)</b>	<b>Foster Road Alignment Alternative (Alternative 3)</b>	<b>Reduced Extension Alternative (Alternative 4)</b>	<b>No-Action Alternative</b>
<b>Air Quality</b>	This alternative would generate temporary dust from grading activities and the use of heavy construction vehicles. This alternative is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program.	This alternative would generate temporary dust from grading activities and the use of heavy construction vehicles. This alternative is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program.	This alternative would generate temporary dust from grading activities and the use of heavy construction vehicles. This alternative is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program.	This alternative would generate temporary dust from grading activities and the use of heavy construction vehicles. This alternative is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program.	This alternative would not increase impacts to air quality.
<b>Noise Impacts</b>	Increased noise levels that would exceed federal and/or County criteria at 4 homes along Clubhouse Drive, which would require an 8-foot-high soundwall, and 23 homes along the existing segment of Union Valley Parkway, which would require an 8-foot-high soundwall or berm.	Increased noise levels that would exceed federal and/or County criteria at 4 homes along Clubhouse Drive, which would require an 8-foot-high soundwall, and 23 homes along the existing segment of Union Valley Parkway, which would require an 8-foot-high soundwall or berm.	Increased noise levels that would exceed federal and/or County criteria at 4 homes along Clubhouse Drive, which would require an 8-foot-high soundwall.	Increased noise levels that would exceed federal and/or County criteria at 23 homes along the existing segment of Union Valley Parkway, which would require an 8-foot-high soundwall or berm.	This alternative would not increase impacts to noise.
<b>Water Quality, Drainage</b>	Not located within 100-year flood zone. Runoff and sedimentation could affect offsite drainages. It would be reduced by implementation of Best Management Practices.	Not located within 100-year flood zone. Runoff and sedimentation could affect offsite drainages. It would be reduced by implementation of Best Management Practices.	Not located within 100-year flood zone. Runoff and sedimentation could affect offsite drainages. It would be reduced by implementation of Best Management Practices.	Not located within 100-year flood zone. Although less than the locally preferred alternative, runoff and sedimentation could affect offsite drainages. It would be reduced by implementation of Best Management Practices.	This alternative would not affect water quality or drainage.
<b>Circulation/ Operations</b>	This alternative would improve the east-west circulation in the project area. This alternative would result in roadway and intersection operations that meet the City, County, and Caltrans Level of Service standards.	This alternative would improve the east-west circulation in the project area. This alternative would result in roadway and intersection operations that meet the City, County, and Caltrans Level of Service standards.	Impacts on transportation and circulation would be greater than locally preferred alternative. This alternative would result in roadway and intersection operations that meet the City and County Level of Service standards with some mitigation required.	Impacts on transportation and circulation would be substantially greater than locally preferred alternative. This alternative would result in roadway and intersection operations that meet the City, County, and Caltrans Level of Service standards with some mitigation required. The Foster Road/State Route 135 intersection does not meet the City, County, or Caltrans Level of Service standards.	This alternative would not improve traffic circulation.

**Table 1-5 Comparison of Alternatives Table**

<b>Potential Impact</b>	<b>Locally Preferred Alignment Alternative (Alternative 1)</b>	<b>Curved Alignment Alternative (Alternative 2)</b>	<b>Foster Road Alignment Alternative (Alternative 3)</b>	<b>Reduced Extension Alternative (Alternative 4)</b>	<b>No-Action Alternative</b>
<b>Construction</b>	This alternative would result in temporary disruption of traffic and may require shifting existing traffic and/or detours. This alternative would increase the impacts to air (dust) and noise (short-term) during construction.	This alternative would result in temporary disruption of traffic and may require shifting existing traffic and/or detours. This alternative would increase the impacts to air (dust) and noise (short-term) during construction.	This alternative would result in temporary disruption of traffic and may require shifting existing traffic and/or detours. This alternative would increase the impacts to air (dust) and noise (short-term) during construction.	This alternative would result in temporary disruption of traffic and may require shifting existing traffic and/or detours. This alternative would increase the impacts to air (dust) and noise (short-term) during construction, but not as much as the other three build alternatives.	This alternative would not affect existing traffic nor would it increase the impacts to air and noise during construction.

#### **1.4.4 Identification of a Preferred Alternative**

The City and Caltrans have selected the Locally-Preferred Alternative as the preferred alternative and Interchange Design Variation 2 as the preferred interchange design, and have made a final determination of the project's effect on the environment.

The Locally-Preferred Alternative would best satisfy the purpose and need for the project, would provide greater beneficial impacts related to relief of existing and future traffic congestion, and associated air contaminant emissions, and would reduce environmental impacts related to aesthetics, land use, and growth inducement compared to other alternatives. This alternative also conforms to the circulation plan of the Santa Maria Airport Business Park Specific Plan.

Interchange Design Variation 2 is preferred because it would satisfy the purpose and need for the project, would provide more drainage capacity, would align better with property lines, would better fit topography, and would be less expensive to construct than the other variations.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, the City has certified that the project complies with the act, prepared findings for all significant impacts identified, prepared a Statement of Overriding Considerations for impacts that will not be mitigated below a level of significance, and certified that the findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations were considered prior to project approval. The City has filed a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse that identifies that the project will have significant impacts, that mitigation measures were included as conditions of project approval, that findings were made, and that a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted. Similarly, Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, has determined that the project does not significantly affect the environment, and has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

#### **1.4.5 Environmentally Superior Alternative**

The California Environmental Quality Act requires that an Environmental Impact Report identify an "Environmentally Superior Alternative." In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, if the No-Action Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative, the alternative among the remaining alternatives that is environmentally superior is also identified. The

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines do not define a precise methodology regarding the determination of the Environmentally Superior Alternative. For the purposes of this analysis, each alternative has been compared within each issue area and a determination has been made as to whether the alternative was superior, inferior, or similar to the No-Action Alternative. Overall rankings are tabulated to determine, for the issue areas in question, which alternative has the highest incidence of being superior when each issue is equally weighted.

Among the alternatives, the No-Action Alternative is considered environmentally superior overall. However, the No-Action Alternative would not meet the project's basic objectives of facilitating smooth and efficient movement of persons and goods within the communities of Santa Maria and Orcutt. Adverse impacts to transportation/circulation and air quality would be greater than those associated with implementation of any build alternative. Of the build alternatives, the Locally Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1) is considered the environmentally superior alternative. The overall aesthetic and biological resource impacts of the Locally Preferred Alignment and Curved Alignment Alternative would be similar, since these alignments have a substantially similar impact area. However, the Locally Preferred Alternative would reduce vehicle noise impacts and aesthetic impacts at Pioneer Park due to its greater distance from the park, would reduce fragmentation of sensitive species habitat by locating disturbance closer to existing urban uses, and would reduce growth inducement impacts to the west of Blosser Road.

It should be noted that the Foster Road Alignment Alternative would be considered environmentally inferior to the Locally Preferred Alternative and would provide fewer beneficial impacts related to relief of existing and future traffic congestion, and associated air contaminant emissions. The Foster Road Alignment Alternative would result in greater impacts related to land use incompatibility, inconsistencies with land use plans, relocations of existing land uses, noise exposure at Pioneer Park, valley needlegrass grassland, and vernal pool fairy shrimp habitat. In addition, the Reduced Extension Alternative would result in less physical disturbance and associated impacts (such as biological resources, etc.) when compared to the Locally Preferred Alternative. However, it would provide fewer beneficial impacts related to relief of existing and future traffic congestion, and associated air contaminant emissions, and would only partially implement the project objectives.

#### **1.4.6 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion**

The following alternatives were considered but eliminated from further discussion for the reasons given below.

Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines states that: “An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. *An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decisionmaking and public participation.* An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason.” (emphasis added).

##### ***Alternative Foster Road Alignment***

Redesigning the Foster Road Alignment Alternative and beginning the curve further east would impact the design of the roadway. The distance between SR 135 and the closest building is only about 1,300 feet, and the horizontal curves, equivalent to almost 90-degree curves, which would be needed to avoid the buildings would not meet the City of Santa Maria required design standards. The tighter curves (i.e., with smaller radii) would result in a substandard design speed and insufficient stopping sight distance. Therefore, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration.”

##### ***Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management***

Implementation of Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management are contemplated in the City’s General Plan Circulation Element. However, implementation of management measures, such as promotion of alternative modes of transportation (Circulation Element Policy C.6.a.1), placement of conditions on development to incorporate trip reduction (Policy C.6.a.2), encouragement of pedestrian-oriented development and transit-oriented development (Objective C.6.2), improvement and expansion of transit service (Policy C.6.b.1), and development of bicycling and pedestrian facilities (Policy C.6.c.1), without construction of the Union Valley Parkway extension and interchange, would not be expected to sufficiently facilitate efficient traffic circulation in the study area vicinity,

in accordance with adopted level of service thresholds, address future safety issues, or conform to adopted plans and policies. Therefore, Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management alternatives were considered but eliminated from further discussion.

Although Transportation System Management measures alone could not satisfy the purpose and need of the project, the following Transportation System Management measures have been incorporated into the build alternatives for this project:

- Multi-purpose Trail
- Class II Bike Path

### ***Union Valley Parkway/State Route 135 interchange alternative***

A version of the project with a full interchange at Union Valley Parkway/State Route 135 was considered but rejected due to high costs, and the presence of physical constraints, including existing land uses. The Project Study Report for the Union Valley Parkway/State Route 135 intersection indicated that an at-grade intersection of UVP/SR 135, rather than a full interchange, best fits the context of the corridor. A traffic study conducted in the year 2000 for the Union Valley Parkway Project Study Report concluded that an interchange would not result in a significant improvement to traffic operations or circulation. Moreover, this document concluded the construction of an interchange would have a negative effect on local circulation by requiring the closure of the SR 135/Foster Road intersection.

### ***Trumpet Interchange***

Caltrans withdrew from consideration a trumpet interchange configuration at Union Valley Parkway and State Route 101 for the following reasons:

- The 1997 Orcutt Community Plan, Traffic Element (pages 145, 146, and 161) refers to a full diamond interchange.
- A Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Bradley Ranch Specific Plan was filed in September 2007.

If a trumpet interchange and the Bradley Ranch Specific Plan were built, the bridge over State Route 101 and the northbound ramps (on and off) would have to be reconstructed at a cost of approximately \$13 million and additional disruption of traffic during the reconstruction would occur.

## 1.5 Permits and Approvals Needed

The permits, reviews, and approvals shown in Table 1-6 would be required for project implementation.

**Table 1-6 Required Permits and Approvals**

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
City of Santa Maria	General Plan Circulation Element Amendment	To be considered by Planning Commission and City Council with this Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment
	Call for Bids	To be considered by City Council with this Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment
	Right-of-way Acquisition and Finding of General Plan Conformance	To be considered by City Council with this Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment
Caltrans	Finding of No Significant Impact	To be considered by Caltrans District 5 Director, as delegated by the Federal Highway Administration, with the Caltrans Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for the project. Caltrans is expected to revise and/or supplement the City's Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment for the purposes of their project approval process.
	Interchange Project Approval	To be considered by Caltrans, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, with the Caltrans Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the project
	Right-of-way Acquisition and Finding of General Plan Conformance	To be considered by Caltrans with the Caltrans Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the project
County of Santa Barbara	Right-of-way Acquisition, dedication, and Finding of General Plan Conformance	To be considered by Board of Supervisors with this Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment
	Encroachment Permits	To be considered by Board of Supervisors with this Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment
	Future Roadway Project Development Approval	The County may potentially use the Environmental Impact Report as a base tier of environmental review for future projects along the County portion of the corridor.
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments	Unknown at this Time	Santa Barbara Association of Governments approvals would not be required for the project. However, this agency may use the Environmental Impact Report in the preparation of environmental evaluations for the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Table 1-6 Required Permits and Approvals**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Permit/Approval</b>	<b>Status</b>
Santa Barbara County Fire Department/ Hazardous Materials	Unknown at this Time	This department would review remediation of existing and past soil contamination, if identified during construction.
California Department of Toxic Substances Control	Unknown at this Time	This department would review remediation of existing and past soil contamination, if identified during construction.
California Department of Conservation, Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources	Unknown at this Time	This division would review remediation of existing and past soil contamination, if identified during construction.
California Water Resources Board	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit; Waste Discharge Permit, if applicable. Section 401 water quality certification.	Applications would be submitted to agencies before construction.
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Section 7 Consultation for Threatened and Endangered Species	Applications would be submitted to agencies before construction.
	Review and Comment on Section 404 Permit, if applicable	Applications would be submitted to agencies before construction.
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit for filling or dredging waters of the United States.	Applications would be submitted to agencies before construction.