

Notice of Preparation

Notice of Preparation

To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies

(Address)

From: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

3331 N. First Street, Building B-2

San Jose, CA 95134

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (☐ is ☒ is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Alex Bode, Environmental Planner III at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: United States Highway (US) 101/State Route (SR) 25/Santa Teresa Boulevard Extension Project

Project Applicant, if any: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Date 7-20-2026

DocuSigned by:
Christina Jaworski
218E662BADD4B9...

Signature
Title Environmental Programs Manager

Telephone 408.321.5751

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE UNITED STATES HIGHWAY (US) 101/STATE ROUTE (SR) 25/SANTA TERESA BOULEVARD EXTENSION PROJECT IN UNINCORPORATED SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 15082 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to seek comments about the scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Assessment (EA) that will be prepared for the United States Highway (US) 101/State Route (SR) 25/Santa Teresa Boulevard Extension Project (Project). This NOP is being issued for the Project to responsible agencies, interested parties, and organizations.

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), as the Project applicant and lead agency under CEQA, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), invites you to comment on the scope and content of the EIR/EA that will be prepared for the Project. Public comments may be received by email, by comment card provided during the in-person public scoping meeting, and/or by mail, as provided below. The scoping period for the Project began on July 20, 2026 and ends on August 24, 2026.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to:

- Reduce congestion on US 101 between the US 101/SR 25 and US 101/Monterey Road interchanges;
- Provide new vehicle and bicycle connectivity between Santa Teresa Boulevard and the US 101/SR 25 interchange; and
- Enhance local and regional access to the US 101 trade corridor.

Need

The Project is needed to address the following:

US 101 Access and Congestion Improvements

Increased freight and passenger vehicle traffic in the Project area has resulted in peak-period congestion at the US 101/Monterey Road interchange, traffic queuing along city and county roads, increased vehicle idling, and unnecessary regional travel delays, with conditions likely worsening over time. To access US 101, drivers in the area are required to utilize the US 101/Monterey Road interchange via Santa Teresa

Boulevard, Thomas Road, and Luchessa Avenue. This limited access results in longer trip lengths and additional congestion along the US 101 corridor and at the US 101/Monterey Road interchange. The Phase 1 project improves traffic operations and safety by removing direct access to US 101 from Castro Valley Road and Mesa Road; however, results in further reduced local access. The Project would enhance access to US 101 and reduce local traffic congestion by providing a direct route to the US 101/SR 25 interchange by extending Santa Teresa Boulevard from the Santa Teresa Boulevard/Castro Valley Road intersection to US 101 and SR 25.

Multimodal Improvements

Currently, cyclists utilize the shoulders of US 101 when traveling in the vicinity of the US 101/SR 25 interchange, which poses safety concerns and restricts the use of alternative modes of transportation when trying to access community resources, including Gavilan College and regional transit. The Project would address existing deficiencies in bicycle facility connectivity and provide a safer and more direct route for cyclists. The Project would also improve access to regional transit services such as VTA's Gilroy Transit Center and the Gilroy Caltrain Station. Additionally, the Project would improve route efficiency for the San Benito County Express Service, which connects the City of Hollister in San Benito County to Gavilan College and the Gilroy Caltrain Station via US 101 and SR 25.

Current state, regional, and local plans and policies encourage the provision of facilities to accommodate and promote safe travel by bicyclists. Specific plans and policies include, but are not limited to, the following:

Santa Clara County Active Transportation Plan (County of Santa Clara, 2025):

The Santa Clara County Active Transportation Plan (ATP) builds on previous efforts to enhance the roadway network to accommodate alternative modes of transportation, including walking and biking. The plan identifies 100 different bicycle network improvement projects that would add over 194 miles of new or improved bicycle facilities and directly respond to existing safety and connectivity concerns.

Santa Clara Countywide Bicycle Plan (VTA, 2018):

This plan envisions a future where Santa Clara County is served by a countywide bicycle network that is safe, convenient, and connected, enabling people of all ages and abilities to easily bike to work, school, shopping, transit, and elsewhere. The plan identifies a connected network of approximately 950 miles of Cross County Bicycle Corridors, including Santa Teresa Boulevard. The plan acknowledges that VTA plays a large role in delivering the Countywide Bicycle Plan by funding local projects and by incorporating high quality bikeways into VTA's capital projects.

Regional Active Transportation Plan (MTC, 2023):

This plan envisions a Bay Area where more people walk and bike on safe, accessible, and connected streets, paths, and trails expanding mobility and access to transit. The plan guides MTC's policy and investment framework needed to achieve Plan Bay Area 2050 goals. It also supports the Plan Bay Area 2050 strategy to build a Complete Streets Network and helps to meet goals for safety, equity, health, resilience and climate change.

Complete Streets Policies (Caltrans, MTC, County of Santa Clara, VTA):

Caltrans, MTC, County of Santa Clara, and VTA have Complete Streets policies that require inclusion of complete streets infrastructure (bicycle, pedestrian, and transit) in capital projects. MTC's Complete Streets Policy (MTC Resolution No. 4493) requires that projects funded with regional funds implement local Complete Streets plans and implement All Ages and Abilities design guidelines on the Active Transportation Network. Both Santa Clara County and VTA have adopted policies that require Complete Streets best practices be used during the planning, design, funding, and construction of all transportation capital projects.

Improved Regional Access

Conditions within the Project area include limited parallel routes, constrained intersection operations, and insufficient last-mile freight connectivity to SR 25 and the broader US 101 trade corridor. The US 101 corridor is considered a major trade corridor connecting northern and southern California. Improving vehicle and bicycle connectivity between Santa Teresa Boulevard and the US 101/SR 25 interchange not only would improve access to adjacent critical services, community resources, employment opportunities, and transit options for local residents, it would also facilitate improved access to goods and services further north and south of the Project area along the US 101 trade corridor. Additionally, highway improvements on US 101 are continuous and sponsored by various public transit agencies at a regional level; therefore, by creating a localized, direct connection from the Santa Teresa Boulevard/Castro Valley Road intersection to the US 101/SR 25 interchange, the Project would connect residents, businesses, and students with other highway improvements further north and south of the Project area.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project would be located along Santa Teresa Boulevard adjacent to Gavilan College in unincorporated Santa Clara County, just south of the City of Gilroy. **Figure 1** below depicts the Project location.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Project was originally included in the US 101 Improvement Project between Monterey Street and State Route 129 CEQA Environmental Impact Report (EIR) completed in 2013¹. The 2013 EIR did envision phasing the improvements at US 101 because of foreseen funding constraints. As such, the US 101/SR 25 Interchange Improvement Project Phase 1 (Phase 1) builds only a portion of the overall interchange improvements originally included in the 2013 EIR. The Phase 1 project will shift the existing US 101/ SR 25 interchange slightly north and includes operational improvements such as replacing the two-lane SR 25 overcrossing with an overcrossing that can accommodate four lanes, US 101 northbound and southbound ramp improvements, and the installation of new traffic signals. The Phase 1 project also

¹Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. 2013. *US 101 Improvement Project between Monterey Street and State Route 129 Final Environmental Impact Report*. Available at: https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/2013_FinalEIR_US101-Improvement_MontereySt-SR129_FullDocument_0.pdf

includes the closure of the Mesa Road and Castro Valley Road access points to US 101. The Phase 1 project began construction in early 2025 and is anticipated to be completed in late 2028.

While the Project is essentially building “Phase 2” of the interchange, which will connect Santa Teresa Boulevard to the new US 101/SR 25 interchange constructed under Phase 1, the official Project name reflects its locally driven purpose and need and demonstrated independent utility and logical termini. As Phase 1 will be completed before the Project begins construction, the Project environmental analysis will include the final Phase 1 interchange configuration as part of the Project baseline.

Project Description

The Project would reconfigure the existing intersection of Santa Teresa Boulevard and Castro Valley Road and extend Santa Teresa Boulevard to directly connect to the US 101/SR 25 interchange. Additionally, the Project would widen the new segment of Santa Teresa Boulevard from two to four lanes as it approaches the southbound ramps intersecting the US 101/SR 25 interchange to accommodate improvements constructed by Phase 1.

The Project consists of the following elements:

- Construction of a new two-lane, two-way approximate 0.9-mile roadway that extends Santa Teresa Boulevard from just north of Castro Valley Road to the US 101/SR 25 interchange. The Santa Teresa Boulevard extension would widen to four lanes as it approaches the US 101/SR 25 interchange;
- The roadway cross section would vary in width from approximately 40 feet to 80 feet at the widest location near the US 101/ SR 25 interchange, including median, 12-foot travel lanes and 5-foot outside shoulders. No sidewalks would be included, but an adjacent, barrier-separated Class I bike path (also allowing pedestrians) would be constructed.
- Standard features such as storm drain inlets and pipelines, bioswales and erosion control would be incorporated, along with roadway lighting.
- Relocation of overhead power lines on the south side of Castro Valley Road along with any other utilities, streetlights and signage impacted by project.
- Reconstruction and potential raising of the Santa Teresa Boulevard/Castro Valley Road intersection and realignment of Santa Teresa Boulevard near the Gavilan College Golf Course;
- Installation of new traffic signals, roundabout, or side-street stop control at the Santa Teresa Boulevard/Castro Valley Road intersection;
- Construction of retaining walls, as needed, along the Project roadway alignment with a maximum wall height of up to 30 feet;
- Installation of a new Class I bike path along one side of the Santa Teresa extension, which would connect to existing bike lanes at both ends of the Project limits;

- Restriping of northbound SR 25, modifying existing signage and traffic signals at the southbound ramp's intersection of the US 101/SR 25 interchange, and potential modifications to the Class I bike path that extends north and is parallel to the southbound off-ramp of US 101; and
- Modifications to existing signage along US 101 to accommodate proposed Project improvements.

Excavation and fill would be required along the entire Project roadway alignment to conform with the existing terrain, with maximum excavation depths anticipated to be up to 40 feet below ground. The amount of excavation would be approximately equal to the amount of fill.

The Class I bike path constructed as part of the Phase 1 project may need to be temporarily closed during construction to enable removal of the concrete barrier separating it from the southbound off-ramp, bridge deck repairs, and installation of roadside signs and pavement markings. Discrete sections of existing roadway pavement would also be demolished. Additionally, access to the Santa Teresa Boulevard/Castro Valley Road intersection would be temporarily affected during construction and require detours.

Construction staging would generally be located within the existing County right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to the Santa Teresa Boulevard/Castro Valley Road intersection, with an additional staging area located to the northwest of the US 101/SR 25 interchange.

Probable Environmental Effects and Scope of the EIR/EA

The EIR/EA will describe existing conditions within the Project area and, additionally, in the surrounding area where there is an identified need for the Project. Relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations will be summarized. The EIR/EA will also detail the standards applied to environmental analysis used to determine Project-related impacts and identify appropriate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

Based on preliminary surveys and available information, VTA has identified the following resource areas that will be evaluated in the EIR/EA. The scope of the environmental analysis will be modified based on public input during the Project scoping period.

Aesthetics

An assessment of visual and aesthetic effects due to the Project will be completed and summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, measures will be identified to reduce or avoid visual and aesthetic impacts.

Agriculture Resources/Forestry Resources

An agricultural resources analysis will be conducted to evaluate the potential for the Project to convert Important Farmland to non-agricultural use and to affect existing agricultural operations within the project study area. The analysis will assess consistency with applicable land use designations, zoning, and farmland protection policies, including any Williamson Act contracts. The environmental document will summarize this analysis and identify measures, such as design modifications or avoidance strategies, to minimize impacts to agricultural lands and operations.

Air Quality

An air quality analysis will be completed to quantify the effects of the Project on the ambient air quality of the project study area and the region. An air quality study will be completed to document if the Project will expose residences or other sensitive receptors to substantial air quality pollutants. The environmental document will summarize this analysis and identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) and, if necessary, applicable measures to reduce impacts to air quality during construction and operation.

Biological Resources

A biological resources analysis will be completed to determine if sensitive wildlife, plants, or habitat is present within the Project study area. Additionally, an invasive plant analysis will be completed and included in the biological resources analysis. A tree survey will be completed to identify trees that are expected to be removed by the Project. The environmental document will summarize the biological resources analysis and tree survey and, if necessary, identify measures to reduce or avoid impacts to biological resources.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Historic-era and precontact archaeological resources analysis with accompanying Native American consultation will be completed to determine if cultural and/or tribal cultural resources would be impacted by the Project. The environmental document will summarize the analysis and consultation process and, if necessary, identify measures to reduce or avoid impacts to cultural and tribal cultural resources.

Energy

An energy analysis will be completed to analyze the potential energy usage required for Project construction and operation. The environmental document will summarize this study and identify BMPs and, if necessary, measures to reduce impacts to energy during construction and operation.

Geology/Soils

Geology and paleontology analyses will be completed to identify geologic hazards, such as active faults, landslides, and liquefiable soils, and the potential for fossils to be present in the project area. The analyses will be summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, measures to reduce or avoid geology and soils impacts will be identified.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis will be completed to determine if the Project would substantially increase GHG emissions. The environmental document will summarize the analysis and, if necessary, identify measures to reduce or avoid GHG emission impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

A hazardous materials analysis will be completed to determine the potential for the Project to disturb contaminated soil. The analysis will be summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, measures will be identified to reduce or avoid hazardous materials impacts.

Hydrology/Water Quality

Hydraulic/flooding analyses will be prepared to assess Project impacts on hydrologic conditions in the surrounding area. Short and long-term effects of the Project on water quality will be analyzed and summarized in the environmental document, including temporary water quality impacts resulting from construction activities. Construction BMPs and, if necessary, measures to reduce or avoid water quality impacts will be identified.

Land Use/Planning/Community Impacts

Potential land use impacts will be evaluated, including whether the Project would divide an established community or conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation. Additionally, potential social, economic, public services, land use, and growth impacts will be discussed and addressed in the environmental document, including potential community concerns during construction of the Project. If necessary, measures to reduce or avoid impacts on land use will be identified.

Recreation

Potential recreation impacts will be evaluated, including the potential for construction of the Project to increase the use of neighborhood and regional recreational facilities. In addition, the environmental document will evaluate the potential for construction adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered recreational facilities. If necessary, measures to reduce or avoid impacts on recreation will be identified.

Transportation

A traffic analysis will be completed for the Project. The traffic study will focus on improvements to roadway operations in the project area, level of service (LOS), and calculate vehicle miles travelled (VMT) with and without the Project. Potential impacts to bicycle circulation will also be analyzed and summarized in the environmental document. If necessary, measures will be identified to reduce or avoid transportation impacts.

Utilities/Service Systems

Potential utilities impacts will be evaluated, including potential impacts on utility towers, transmission lines, water supply, wastewater generation, stormwater, and solid waste during construction of the Project. If necessary, measures to reduce or avoid impacts on utilities and service systems will be identified.

Noise and Vibration

A noise and vibration analysis will be prepared to determine if construction and/or operational noise or vibration impacts would occur on nearby land uses. Current noise levels will be measured, and future noise levels will be modeled based on Project traffic operations. The environmental document will summarize the noise and vibration analysis and, if necessary, identify measures to reduce or avoid noise and/or vibration impacts.

Cortese List Notice

Pursuant to Public Resource Code 21092.6(a), the Project area is not located on any sites included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (California Department of Toxic Substances Control list of various hazardous sites).

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Comments on the scope and content of the EIR/EA must be provided in writing no later than 5pm on August 24, 2026 using any of the following methods.

By Mail	By Email	In Person
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Attn: Alex Bode, Environmental Planner III 3331 N. First Street, Building B-2 San Jose, CA 95134	101-santateresa@vta.org	Using comment cards provided at the public scoping meeting on August 11, 2026 from 6pm-7pm at: Gavilan College Student Center Lounge 5055 Santa Teresa Boulevard Gilroy, California 95020

All comments received will become part of the public record and any personal information provided may be posted on VTA's website and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the California Public Records Act.

US 101/SR25/Santa Teresa Boulevard Extension Project

