

3.9 TRANSPORTATION

This section provides a discussion of the existing conditions associated with transportation within and around the Project area and an analysis of potential impacts that may occur as the result of repealing the HTCMP and adoption of the elements identified in Chapter 2. The information and analysis in this section is based on the Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) prepared by Transpo Group (2020). The report is included as Appendix E.

3.9.1 Introduction

The TIA analysis considers regional Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the basis for determining transportation impacts.

3.9.2 Existing Environmental Setting

This section provides an overview of the existing transportation system within the Project area. The existing transportation system including existing VMT, transit, non-motorized and parking are described.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

The City has not yet adopted a City-specific VMT threshold. The City is utilizing the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) guidance of a threshold of 15 percent below existing regional VMT (or 85 percent of the region VMT per capita). The regional VMT was determined to be the Orange County VMT, which is represented in the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM). This VMT analysis was based on the baseline (2012) OCTAM, which represents the existing conditions. Per capita or persons was also determined for the region using OCTAM. The calculation of the VMT threshold based on the OCTAM is shown in Table 3-17.

Table 3-17: Calculation of Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita Threshold

Region VMT	395,307,262
Region Capita	16,869,388
Region VMT per Capita	23.4
VMT Threshold (85% of Region)	19.9

Notes: VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled

1. Based on Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM) baseline (2012) model.
 2. Calculated by dividing Region VMT by Region Capita
 3. The VMT threshold is 85% of the regional VMT per Capita
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This analysis uses the OCTAM to determine the VMT for the Historic Town Center area under No Project and Project Alternatives. Per capita for the Alternatives was calculated using estimated trip generation and the regional average vehicle trips per person from the baseline OCTAM. The overall VMT per capita for the Alternatives was determined by dividing the baseline VMT by the total persons (capita). VMT impacts of the Alternatives are identified by comparing VMT per capita for the Alternatives and the region. VMT impacts are considered significant if the Alternatives are above the VMT per capita threshold.

Transit

Transit bus service in the Project area is operated by OCTA with one regional bus route. The San Juan Capistrano train station is also located within the Project area where rail service is provided by Metrolink and Amtrak.

Route 91 provides local bus service between Laguna Hills and San Clemente, with stops along Del Obispo Street and Camino Capistrano. The route operates approximately every 30 minutes on weekdays with service provided between approximately 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. The route also operates between approximately 7 a.m. and 7:45 p.m. on Saturday and 7:30 a.m. and 8:05 p.m. on Sunday. During weekend, Route 91 provides service approximately every 30 minutes on Saturday and every 45 minutes on Sunday.

The City has a Summer Trolley Service, which begins in early June and operates for 13 consecutive weekends through Labor Day. This service includes two trolleys on 20-minute frequencies services a continuous loop from downtown San Juan Capistrano (La Zanja Street northern terminus) to a Dana Point trolley connection stop at Stonehill Drive and Del Obispo Street. Service hours are Fridays from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (City 2020). The purpose of the Summer Trolley Service is to reduce demand for parking and reduce vehicle trips within the City.

Metrolink provides commuter rail service within San Juan Capistrano. The system connects Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties in Southern California. Two lines operate through San Juan Capistrano, Inland Empire – Orange County Line and Orange County Line. These lines connect San Juan Capistrano with Oceanside, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles.

Amtrak operates the Pacific Surfliner passenger train service, serving communities between San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Juan Capistrano, and San Diego. Amtrak operates 18 trains in the southbound direction and 19 trains northbound. Most trains only serve the route segment from Los Angeles and San Diego, with some trains running to and from San Luis Obispo. The passenger train service has approximately 40-minute headways during the AM peak hour and 70-minute headways during the PM peak hour. Amtrak provides a connecting bus service, Thruway, with the service starting and ending at San Juan Capistrano station.

OCTA also provides mobility services for the San Juan Capistrano residents that are 60 years and older for free. This service provides on-demand door-to-door transportation via bus or a shuttle to and from San Juan Capistrano Community/Senior Center. The service is also provided for medical and grocery trips within the City.

Non-Motorized

Sidewalks and off-street trails are the primary pedestrian facility within the Project area. Sidewalks within the Project area are typically provided on both sides of the street with some segments of Alipaz Street, Plaza Drive, and Ortega Highway with sidewalks on one side. Sidewalks are not provided along Forster Street, Spring Street, and Acjachema Street.

The City has an extensive network of on- and off-street bicycle infrastructure; however, there are no bicycle facilities within the Project Area. Cyclists share the streets with vehicles in the Project area. Bicycle lanes are provided along both sides of Camino Capistrano between Avenida Padre and Avenida

Golondrina/Del Obispo Street and from La Zanja to the north and along Del Obispo Street between Alipaz Street and Stonehill Drive. In addition, sharrows (or designated shared vehicle/bicycle facilities) are provided along Camino Capistrano between Del Obispo Street and Foster Street.

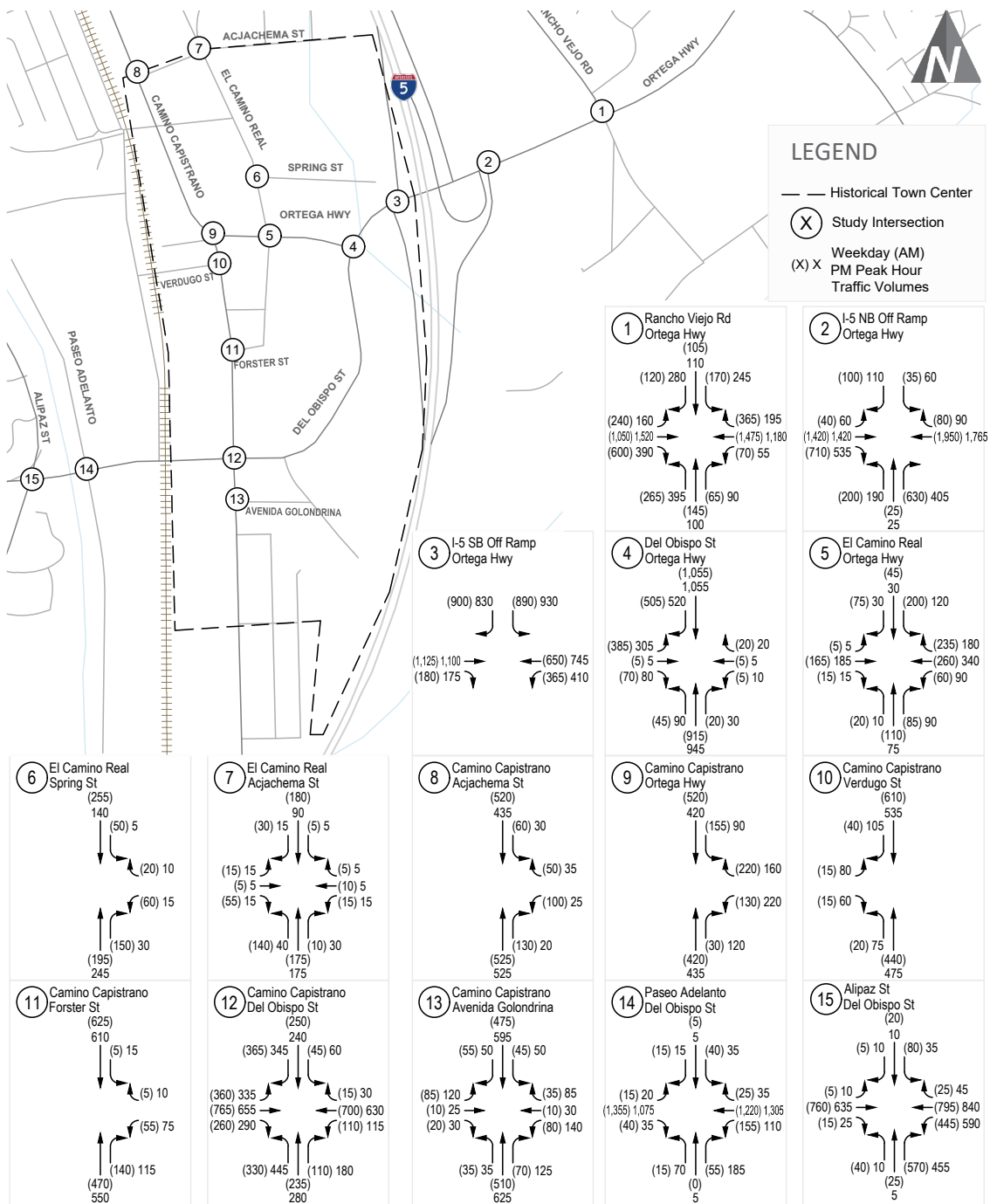
The Robert McCollum Memorial Bicycle Trail is a paved trail along Camino Capistrano located north of La Zanja street. Trabuco Creek Trail is another off-street paved trail located along Tabuco Creek and Paseo Adelanto and about one-mile length. Caballo Trail is a paved multi-use pathway along Rancho Viejo Road.

Parking

As part of the FBC, the Park Once Program was established as a policy to encourage visitors to the HTCMP area to only park one time and be able to access desired locations within a five minute walk from the City-owned public parking lots (Zoning Code Sec. 9-3.535). However, the Park Once Program conflicted with other City parking standards already in place.

A parking inventory was conducted within the Project area to understand the current parking supply. There was some construction in the study area including the block south of El Camino Real between Ortega Highway and Spring Street and a portion of the block between I-5 and Del Obispo Street; therefore, the supply identified is less than a period without construction. There are approximately 2,790 off-street parking spaces and 170 on-street parking spaces in the HTC for a total of 2,960 parking spaces.

Figure 3-5: Existing Weekday AM and PM Peak Hour Traffic Volumes



Existing Weekday Peak Hour Traffic Volumes

Historic Town Center Master Plan, General Plan Amendment, and Ordinance Change Project



FIGURE
3-5

3.9.3 Impacts and Mitigation

Impact 3.9-1: Would the Project conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Vehicle Miles Traveled

The review of VMT impacts focuses on how land use projects influence automobile use and removes the focus on intersection and roadway traffic. The City of San Juan Capistrano is currently developing VMT policies and procedures but has not yet adopted a VMT threshold for evaluating land use projects. As described in the Methodology section of this study, the City is utilizing the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) guidance for a threshold of 15 percent below existing regional VMT per capita (or 85 percent of the regional VMT per capita). This threshold strives to keep the local VMT less than the current region VMT per capita even with growth related to land use development. Achieving this VMT threshold means that there would be less miles traveled by vehicle per person in the local area. Cities and developments are able to achieve this threshold by providing alternatives to driving alone such as transit, telecommuting, rideshare, walking and biking facilities as well as increasing land densities and mixes of uses so that people do not have to travel long distances for living, working and playing.

Following OPR’s guidance regarding VMT analysis, areas within a ½ mile of an existing major transit stop or corridor are considered to have a less than significant impact on VMT. As shown in Figure 8 of Appendix E, the HTC area is within ½-mile of the San Juan Capistrano Station, which is considered a major transit stop and corridor. Although the HTC area is within ½-mile of an existing major transit corridor, a quantitative VMT analysis was conducted to analyze potential VMT impacts.

Table 3-18 provides a comparison of the No Project and Project Alternatives VMT per capita to the VMT threshold.

Table 3-18: Comparison of Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita

	No Project Alternative	Project Alternative
VMT Threshold ¹	19.9	
Estimated VMT ²	113,430	103,925
Estimated Capita ²	6,240 persons	5,715 persons
VMT Per Capita ²	18.2	18.2
VMT at or Below Threshold	Yes	Yes

Notes: VTM = Vehicle Miles Traveled

1. The VMT threshold represents 85% of the VMT per capita from the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM) baseline (2012) model
2. VMT based on the OCTAM baseline for the Historic Town Center (HTC) area. Persons estimated based on vehicle trip generation by Alternative as well as the average vehicle trips per person based on the OCTAM.

As shown in Table 3-18, both the No Project and Project VMT per capita would meet the City’s VMT standard and are below the VMT threshold. The VMT per capita is the same for both Alternatives because the land use is similar; therefore, the No Project generates more VMT but is denser and has a higher population (due to the incorporation of residential uses) while the Project generates less VMT with a lower population so the resulting VMT per capita is the same. The analysis shows for the No Project and Project Alternative the VMT impact is less than significant.

Non-auto options are readily available in the Project area; and, as transit, transportation demand management, rideshare, and non-motorized improvements are made, vehicle miles traveled would be reduced. The Project area is a walkable part of the City with sidewalks provided on the street network and multipurpose trails. In addition, train and bus access is provided for commuting and regional trips. Access to transit, bicycle facilities and walkable routes is anticipated to be similar for all alternatives.

Transit

As documented in the HTCMP, the No Project Alternative would promote public transit ridership by proposing non-motorized infrastructure improvements along Ortega Highway and Camino Capistrano and extending local streets. However, no service changes are proposed with the No Project Alternative.

The Proposed Project would rely on long-range planning as proposed by the General Plan and transit agencies. The General Plan includes goals related to promoting an advanced public transportation network and providing an extensive public bicycle and pedestrian system. In addition, the OCTA 2018 Long-Range Transportation Plan for 2040 does not have any additional routes added that will serve the Project area.

Transit service and connections with the No Project and Proposed Project are anticipated to be similar with no major changes by OCTA, Metrolink, and Amtrak and connections provided to promote use of the system and reduce reliance on auto.

Non-motorized

The No Project includes improvements such as widened sidewalks, additional crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, and sidewalk bulb-outs along Ortega Highway, Del Obispo Street, and Camino Capistrano as documented in the HTCMP. Additionally, the new pedestrian and bicycle connectors are proposed to the San Juan Capistrano HTC from the north (El Horno Street underpass), west (new bridge over Trabuco Creek and enhanced Verdugo Street), and from the east (I-5/Ortega Highway realignment for incorporating bicycle lanes). The I-5/Ortega Highway realignment is completed.

As describe above, the Proposed Project would rely on long-range planning as proposed by the General Plan and OCTA. The OCTA 2018 Long-Range Transportation Plan proposes an additional Class 1 Bike Path along Camino Capistrano from Del Obispo Street to La Zanja Street within the study area. Additional connections and improvements with the Proposed Project would be related to development that occurs within the Project area.

Parking

The No Project includes parking infrastructure projects, the Park Once Program, and 2012 FBC, which includes shared parking and “in-lieu” payments. Although the HTCMP discusses parking and public infrastructure projects, including a parking structure, the Park Once Program itself only involves parking standards that would allow visitors to park one time and be able to access desired locations within a five minute walk from the City-owned public parking lots. The Proposed Project would clarify parking requirements in the HTC area by affirming and readopting the Park Once Program. The Zoning Code would be amended to clarify parking standards consistent with the existing Park Once Program.

Conclusion

The Proposed Project generally results in less traffic to and from the Project area and traffic operations that are generally similar to or slightly better than the No Project scenario; therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a new significant impact. Implementation of the Proposed Project would have a less than significant impacts with regards to compliance with existing transportation plans covering the Project area.

Impact 3.9-2: Would the Project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3 or with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to, level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

As described above in Impact 3.9-1, the Proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts based on the VMT analysis above. Although height of hotels and allowable FAR within the HTC area would be potentially increased, the overall VMT would be reduced with implementation of existing City transit goals. The Proposed Project incorporates the goals and policies of the City's General Plan including measures to increase safety, encouraging developing Complete Streets facilities, and increasing regional connectivity. The City's policies will also require complete streets and consideration of alternative modes, which could encourage alternative travel and potentially reduce vehicle trips especially with improvements that encourage walking between uses thereby reducing excess vehicle trips travelling between uses within the Project area.

Orange County Transportation Authority has a LOS E threshold for the CMP Highway System intersections. CMP intersections within the study area include: I-5 Northbound Ramp/Ortega Highway and I-5 Southbound Ramp/Ortega Highway. As shown in Table 3-14 in Section 3.8.3, the Proposed Project would not result in any CMP intersections operating at LOS E or below; therefore, this impact is less than significant. In addition, the Proposed Project impacts would be under the VMT thresholds outlined by OPR; thus, VMT impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are necessary.

3.9.4 Cumulative Impacts

The No Project and Proposed Project analyses contained above in Impact 3.9-1 assess the traffic impacts of all cumulative development anticipated by the Year 2040. As shown above, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in any new impacts associated with VMT or service standards when compared to the No Project scenario; the Proposed Project would not require any new mitigation to reduce potentially significant impacts.

The future 2040 traffic volumes for the Proposed Project are based the future 2040 volumes presented in The Farm Specific Plan Traffic Impact Analysis (Farm TIA) (LSA, February 2018)⁵. The Farm TIA is consistent with the objectives and requirements of the City's Administrative Policy No. 310 and the City's General

⁵ These forecasts include development of projects such as the River Street Marketplace Project. A site-specific transportation study has also been conducted for the River Street Marketplace Project.

Plan Circulation Element and Growth Management Element (December 1999). The traffic forecast volumes in the Farm TIA were prepared using the Orange County Transportation Analysis Model (OCTAM), the long-range traffic modeling tool used for sub-regional traffic planning in the area. The OCTAM is a travel demand model that provides more specific land use and network information for Orange County and is derived from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Model. The use of the 2040 traffic volumes included potential future cumulative impacts, and with the 2040 traffic volumes, no additional impacts to service standards would occur. As such, implementation of the Proposed Project would result in less than significant cumulative impacts.