

Welcome!

Community Workshop #1

Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan Update and EIR/EIS

June 24, 2025





Agenda

- **Open House Overview**
- **Project Background**
- **Project Overview**
- **Project Process**
- **Schedule at a Glance**
- **Next Steps**

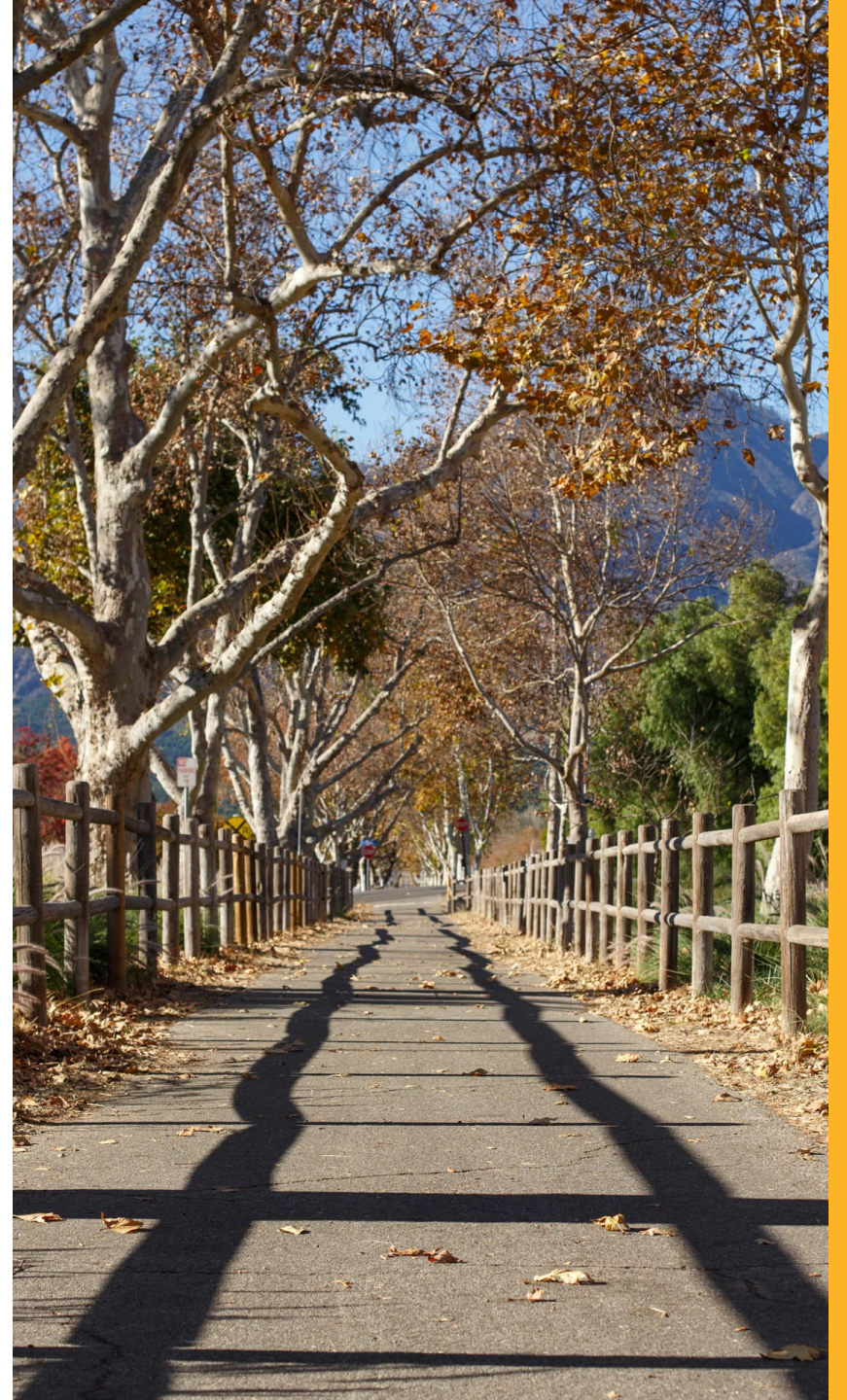


Open House Overview



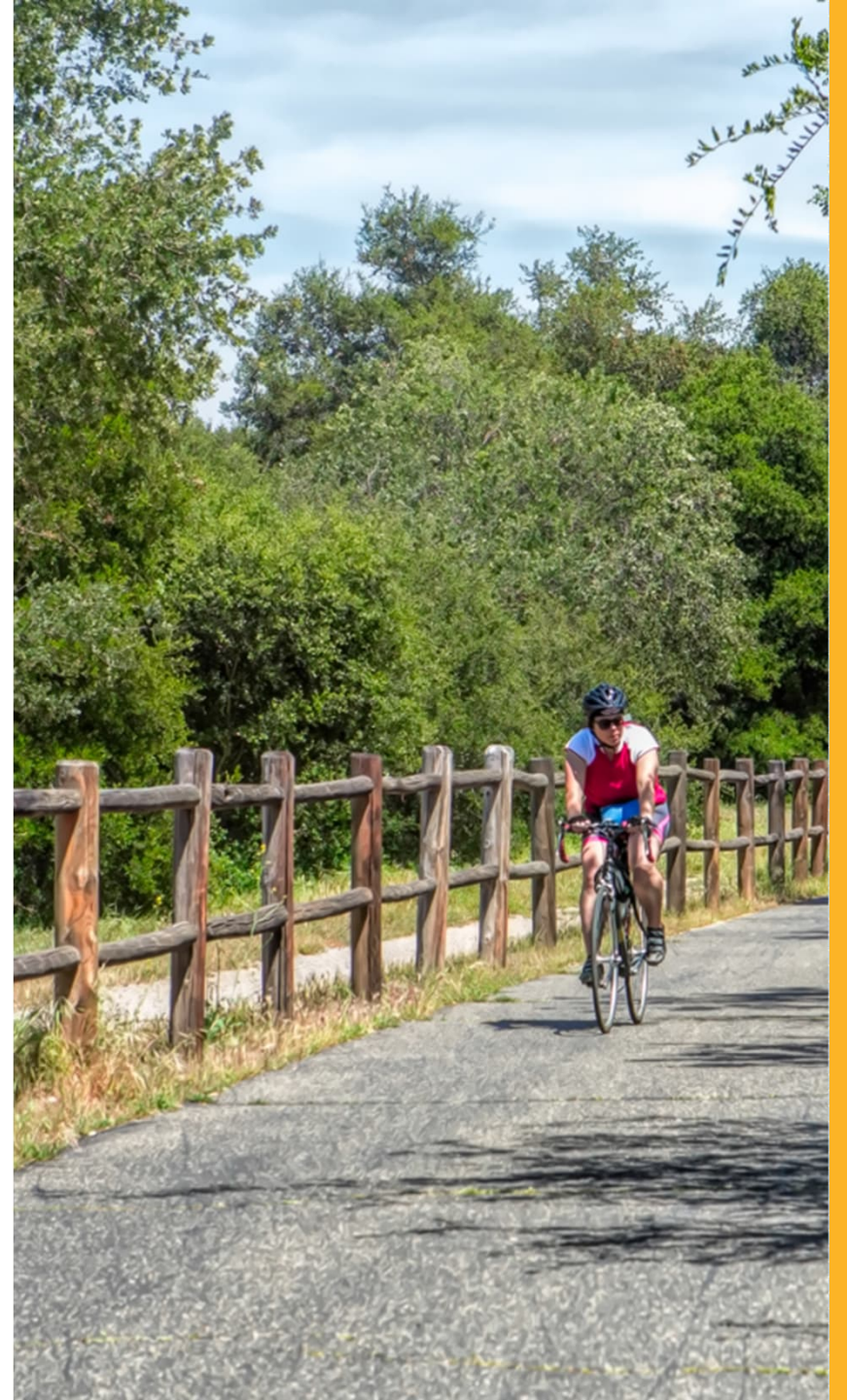
Why are we here?

- Reinvigorate Santa Paula Branch Line Trail planning from Saticoy to Piru
- Learn from attendees what your priorities are and solicit feedback on the trail
- Generate implementable vision for the trail
- Update Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan from 2000
- Develop new environmental document (Program EIR/EIS)



Open House Activities

- Presentation
- Display boards with staff
- Project corridor maps with staff



Project Background



What is the Project?

- SPBL Trail Master Plan Update and EIR/EIS Project
- Rails WITH Trails
- Updates Master Plan from 2000
 - No construction planned at this time
- Develops new environmental document



Source: <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/public-works/engineering/public-works-projects/coastal-rail-trail>



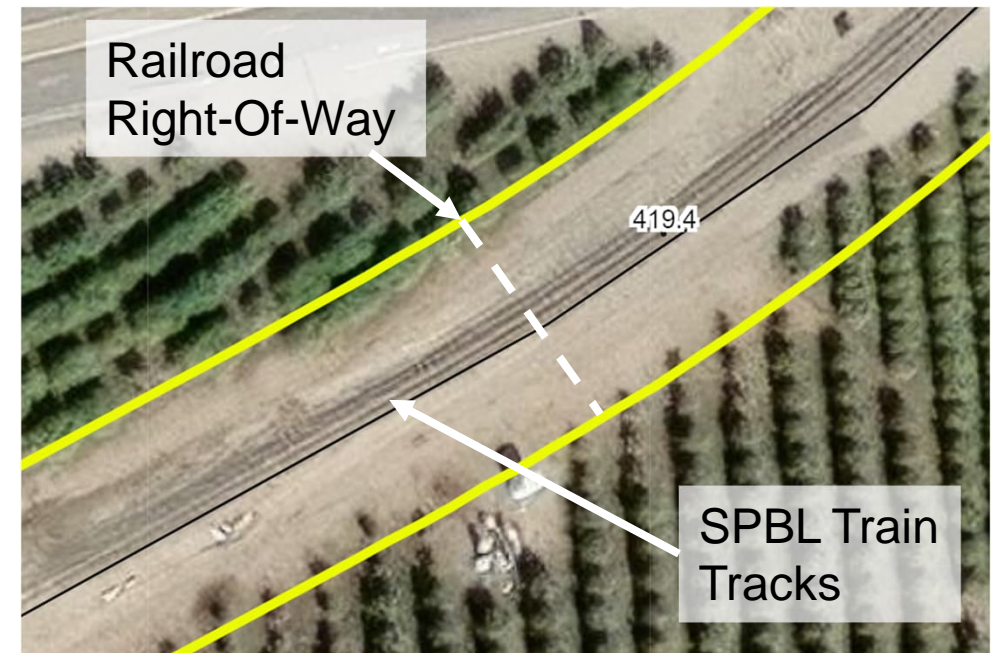
History of the SPBL Railroad

- SPBL right-of-way assembled in 1880s by Southern Pacific Railway
- Opened in 1887
- Shared history of railroads and agriculture



What is Right-of-Way?

- Right-of-way refers to a linear corridor used for transportation infrastructure like roads, railroads, and trails
- VCTC-owned SPBL right-of-way consists of 99 parcels typically 100' wide extending 32 miles from East Ventura/Montalvo Metrolink Station through unincorporated Piru community



Source: <https://www.goventura.org/getting-around/spbl/>

SPBL Timeline (1995 - Now)



Services and Activities on the SPBL

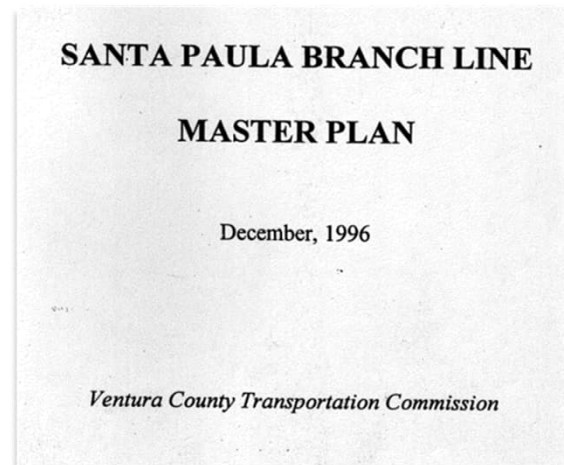
- Railroad Lease & Operations Agreement with Sierra Northern Railway defines use for “Railroad Purposes”
 - Freight and transload services
 - Installing spur lines
 - Storing/switching rail cars
 - Services related to movie, film, television, commercial, media, and entertainment
 - Tourism and seasonal passenger services



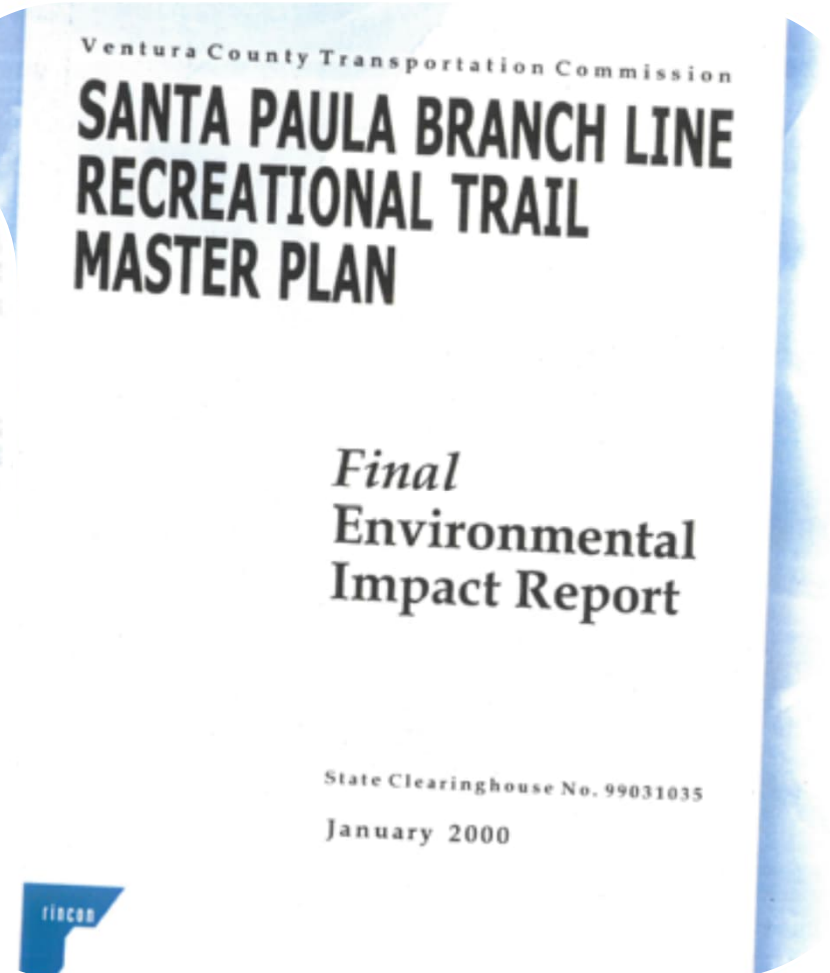
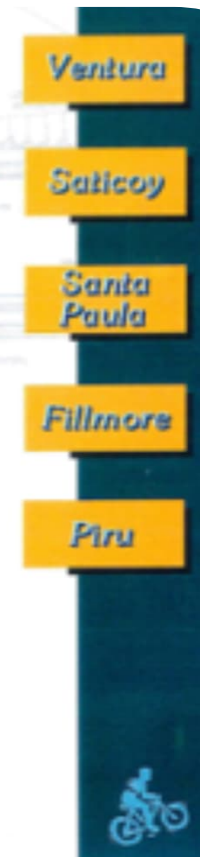
Acquisition, Trail Master Plan & EIR

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES (not to exceed 60 words)

This project is the acquisition of the 32-mile-long Santa Paula Branch railroad right-of-way for use as a multimodal corridor serving five communities within Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. The corridor will be used for a bicycle and hiking trail; for freight port access, recreation, and possibly commuter rail service; for pipelines and utilities; for public parks, greenbelts and gateways to communities; for access to the Coastal Bicycle Trail and the De Anza National Historic Trail; and for access to the State High Speed Rail Corridor. The acquisition includes 388 acres of land, 29 miles of operating track, bridges, buildings and related improvements.



Santa Paula Branch Line
Recreational Trail
Master Plan



Existing Trail Segments

Built Trail Sections in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru

**Santa Paula –
2.2 miles opened 2012**



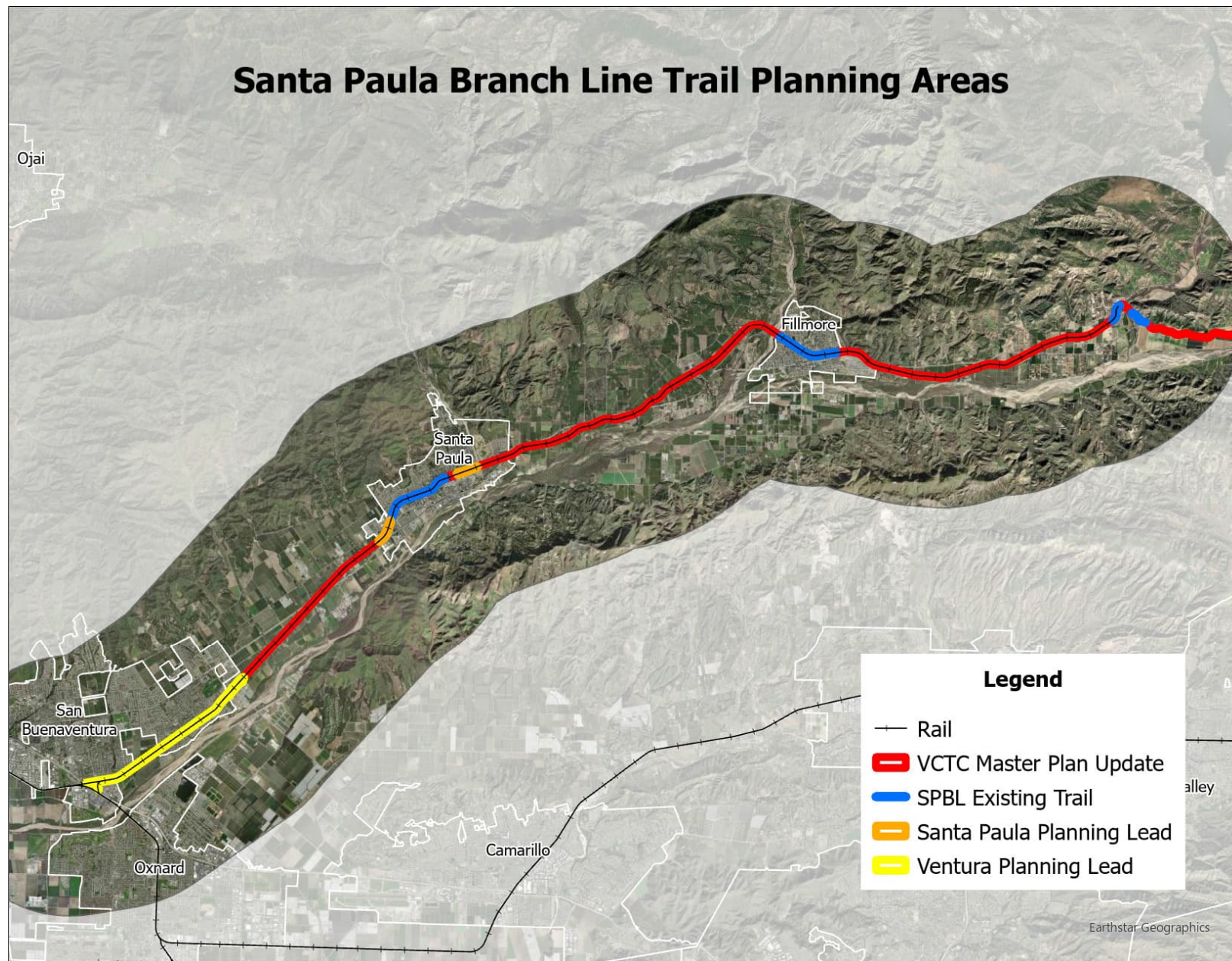
**Fillmore – 1.3 miles
opened 2007**



**Piru – 0.3 miles
opened 2005 & 2007**



Santa Paula Branch Line Today

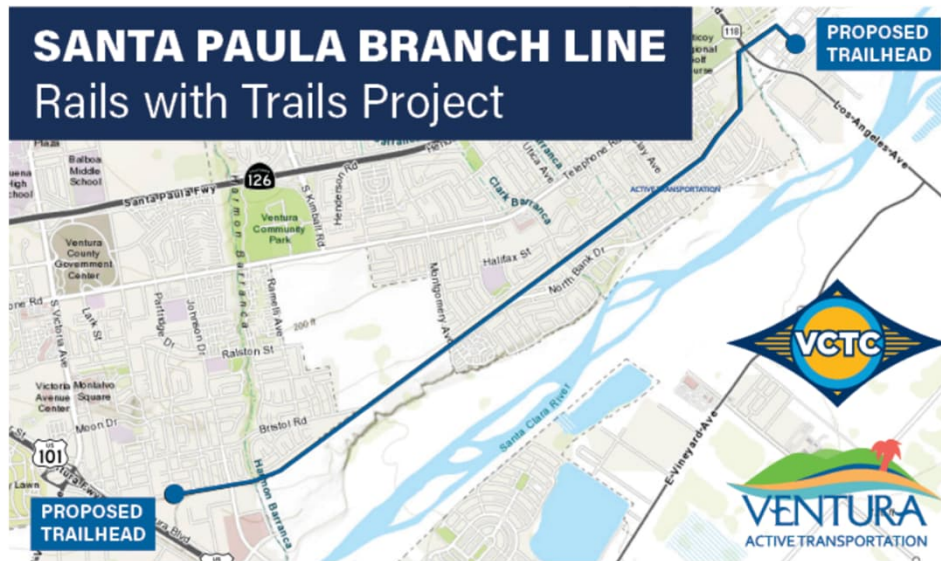


Current SPBL Trail Activities

- City of Ventura SPBL Trail Project
 - 4-mile trail connecting Montalvo Metrolink Station with Saticoy Depot
 - Currently in design, funding secured for construction
- City of Santa Paula SPBL Trail Project
 - 2.5-mile extension of existing trail
 - Currently in design, seeking construction funds
- VCTC Master Plan Update and EIR/EIS
 - 28-miles of trail planning from Saticoy to Piru, including Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Ventura County
 - Conceptual planning and design with focus on updating Master Plan and delivering new EIR/EIS



City of Ventura SPBL Trail Project



Proposed: North Bank Dr.



City of Ventura Project Website:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/98441f509f2048d89adb36ceec806522>

City of Santa Paula's Trail Connectivity Project

The Santa Paula Trail Connectivity Project El Proyecto de Conectividad de caminos de Santa Paula

COMMUNITY MEETING #1 RESULTS
DECEMBER 12, 2024

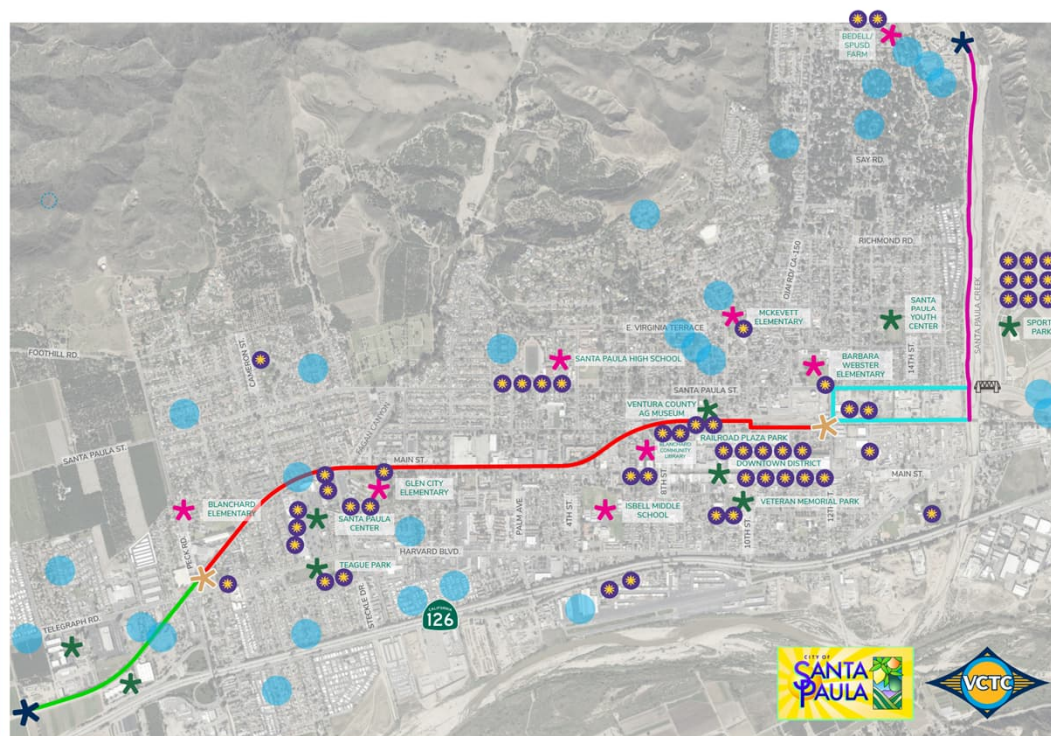
Where do you live?
¿Dónde vive?

Place a dot near
your area of
residence
Pon un punto
donde vives

Place a dot at
destinations that
you may use the
trail to get to
(parks, schools,
jobs, food).
Pon un punto en
los destinos para
los que puedas
utilizar el sendero
(parques, colegios,
trabajos, comida).

Legend
Leyenda

NEW TRAIL TERMINUS
EL FINAL NUEVO DEL
CAMINO
EXISTING TRAIL TERMINUS
EL FINAL EXISTENTE DEL
CAMINO
SCHOOL | ESCUELA
COMMUNITY DESTINO
DESTINATION COMUNITARIO
WEST SEGMENT
SEGMENTO OESTE
EXISTING SEGMENT
SEGMENTO EXISTENTE
EAST SEGMENT
SEGMENTO ESTE
NORTH SEGMENT
SEGMENTO NORTE



City of Santa Paula Project Website:

<https://spcity.org/797/Santa-Paula-Trail-Connectivity-Project>

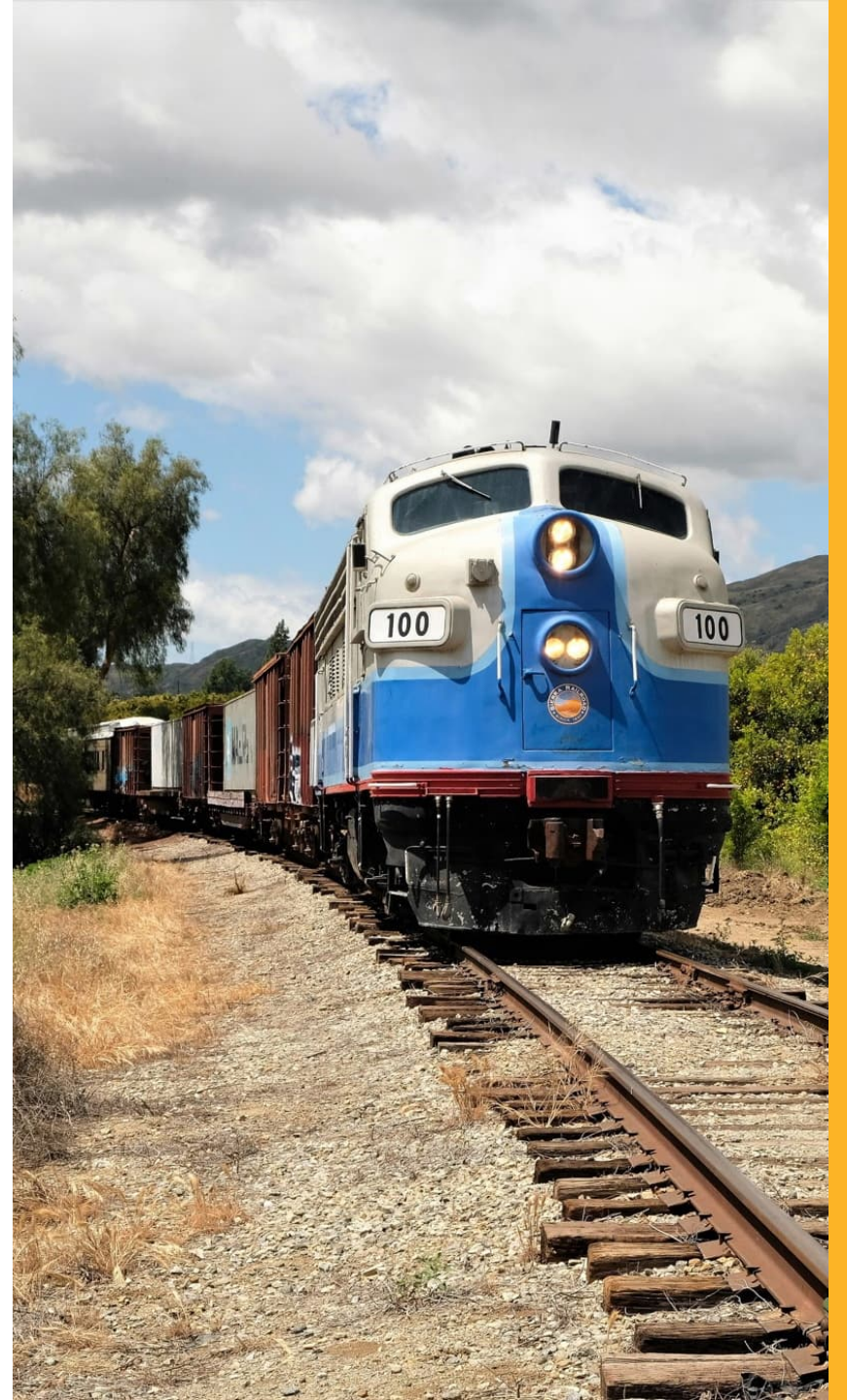
Project Overview



Key Project Objectives

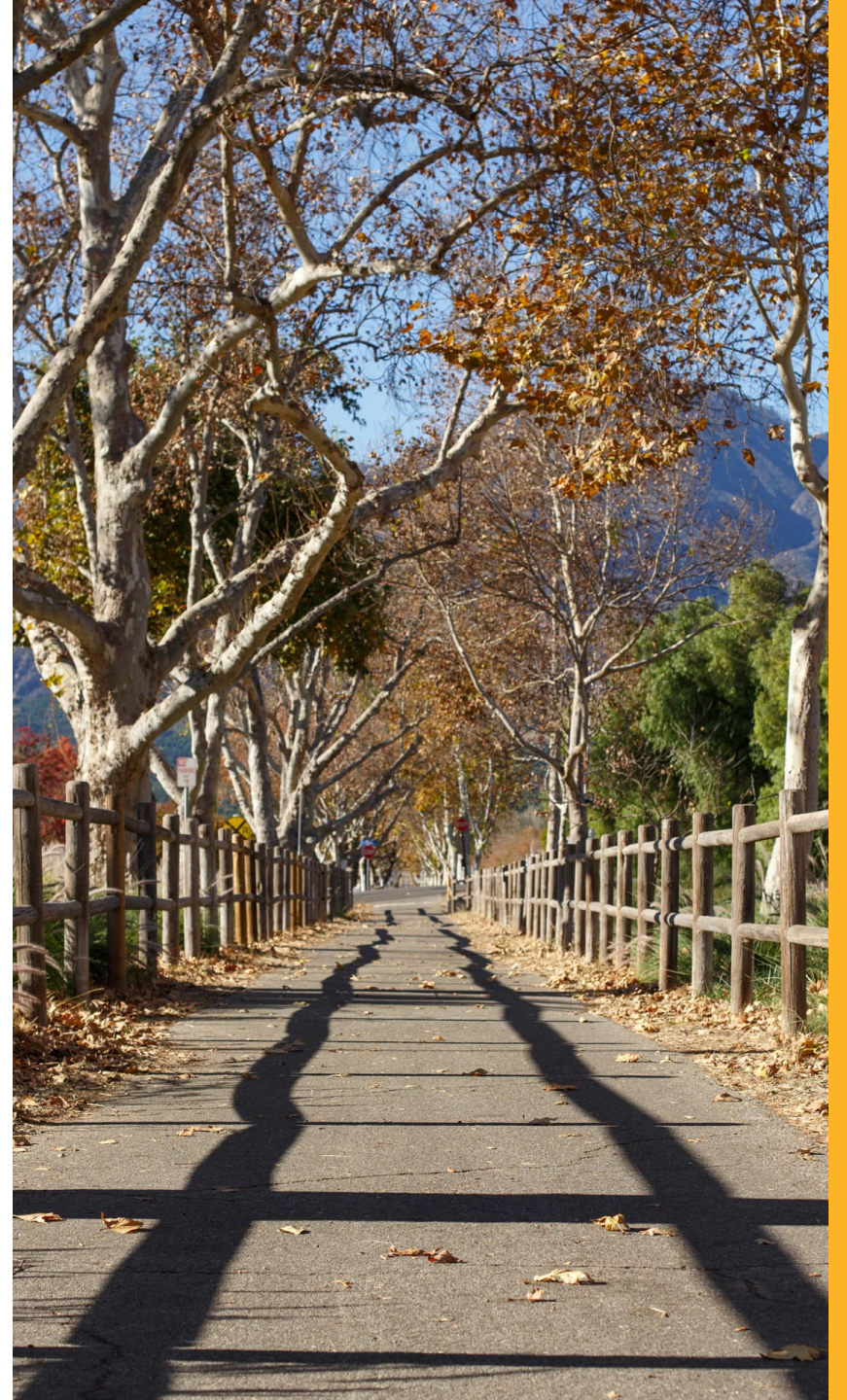
- Meet commuter and recreational needs
- Connect to existing and planned trails
- Maximize user safety
- Minimize disruption to adjacent agricultural activities
- Continued & expanded tourism
- Integrate cultural, historical, and educational elements
- High-quality linear park experience

Source: *Master Plan EIR 2000*



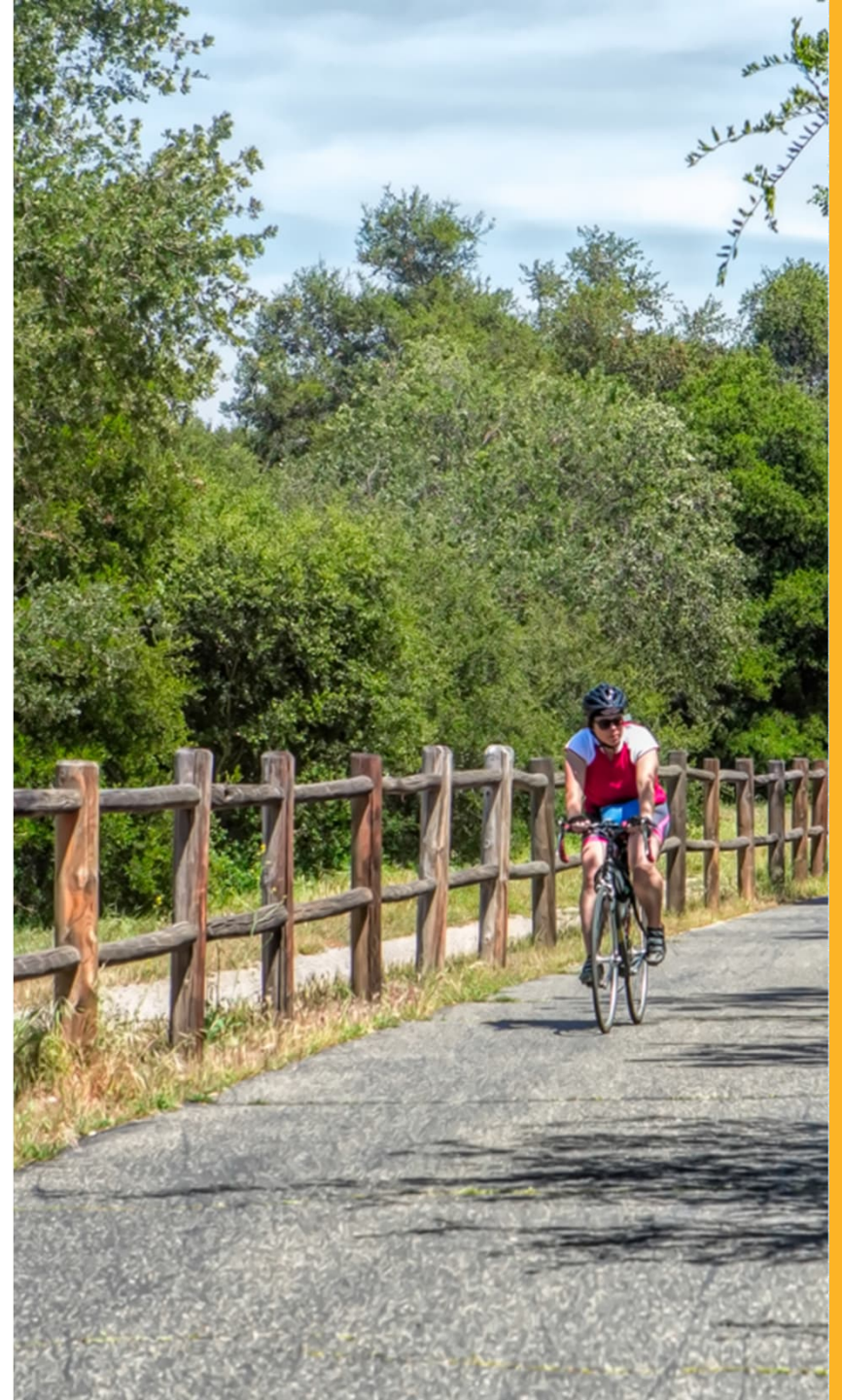
Benefits of Trails

- Economic Benefits
 - Increased property values
 - Economic benefits of both commute and recreational trips
- Connectivity with transit fosters transit ridership recovery (first/last mile solutions)
- Provide safe non-motorized transportation routes that improve air quality
- Facilitate use of clean transportation alternatives
- Reduces air pollution from motorized vehicles, which can damage agricultural crops



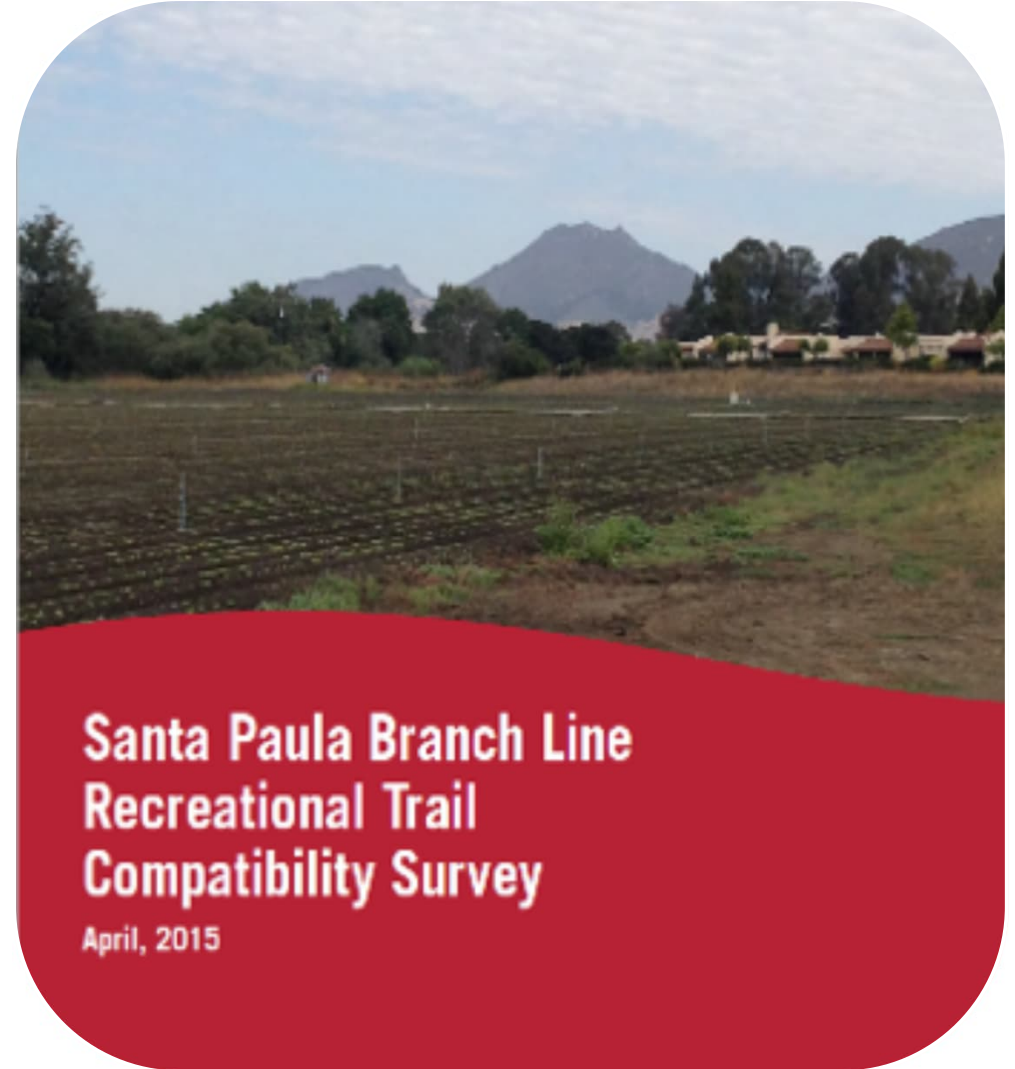
VCTC Strategic Plan

- April 2022: VCTC adopted goal to “reinvigorate the process to complete the SPBL trail”
- April 2023: VCTC adopted Strategic Plan FY 22/23 – 27/28
 - **Strategy A-8: Update SPBL trail master plan, validate trail alignment, connections, and amenities, and update existing conditions to facilitate trail completion, with stakeholder engagement.**
 - Strategy B-21: Partner with Sierra Northern Railway, corridor cities and the County to operate, maintain, and improve the SPBL railroad and right-of-way corridor as a countywide community asset, ensuring outreach to stakeholders in the process.
 - Strategy B-22: Continue to address encroachment into the SPBL right-of-way through leasing activities to ensure safety of operations and protection of the asset and infrastructure.





Trail Compatibility





Local Plan Compatibility



Santa Paula 2040 General Plan



Source: City of Santa Paula General Plan Update, Mobility Element Technical Report, December 2019
Figure 3-10 – Preferred Plan, Bicycle Facilities

March 4, 2020

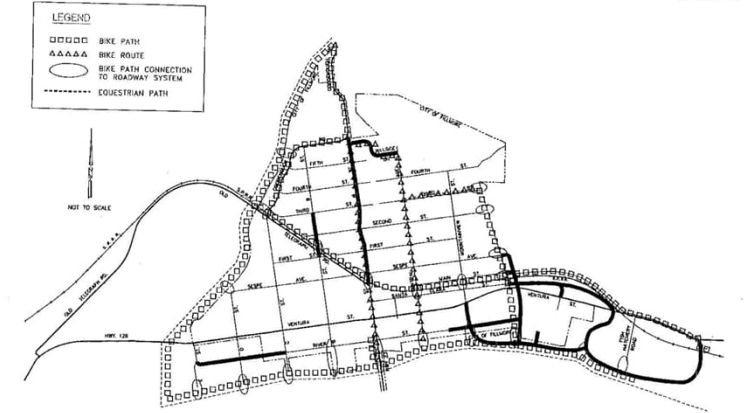
Circulation and Mobility – 3-35

**City of Santa Paula
2040 General Plan (2020)**



**County of Ventura
2040 General Plan**

City of Fillmore
General Plan Update EIR
Circulation Element



Source: Wilson Associates, 2003

Proposed City-Wide Bicycle Circulation System

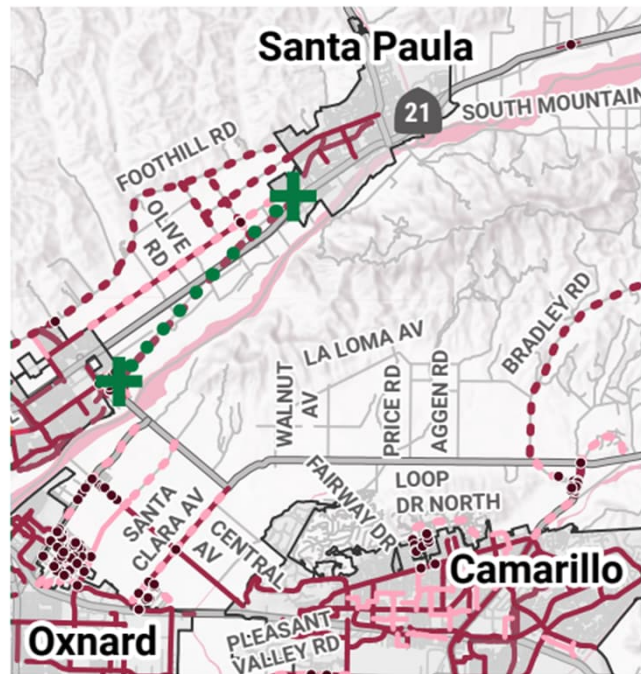
C-7

City of Fillmore

**City of Fillmore
General Plan (2003)**



VCTC Bicycle Wayfinding Plan (2017)



Location within county



Ventura County Active Transportation Plan (2024)



Saticoy Active Transportation Plan (2020)



Saticoy Active Transportation Plan
September 2020



Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges:

- Right-of-way constraints
- Constrained bridges
- At-grade crossings
- Minimize disruptions to adjacent agricultural activities

Opportunities:

- Build on previous studies
- Connect to existing and planned trails
- Incorporated historic and educational elements



Project Process



Project Process



Conceptual Planning



Conceptual Design



Outreach & Engagement

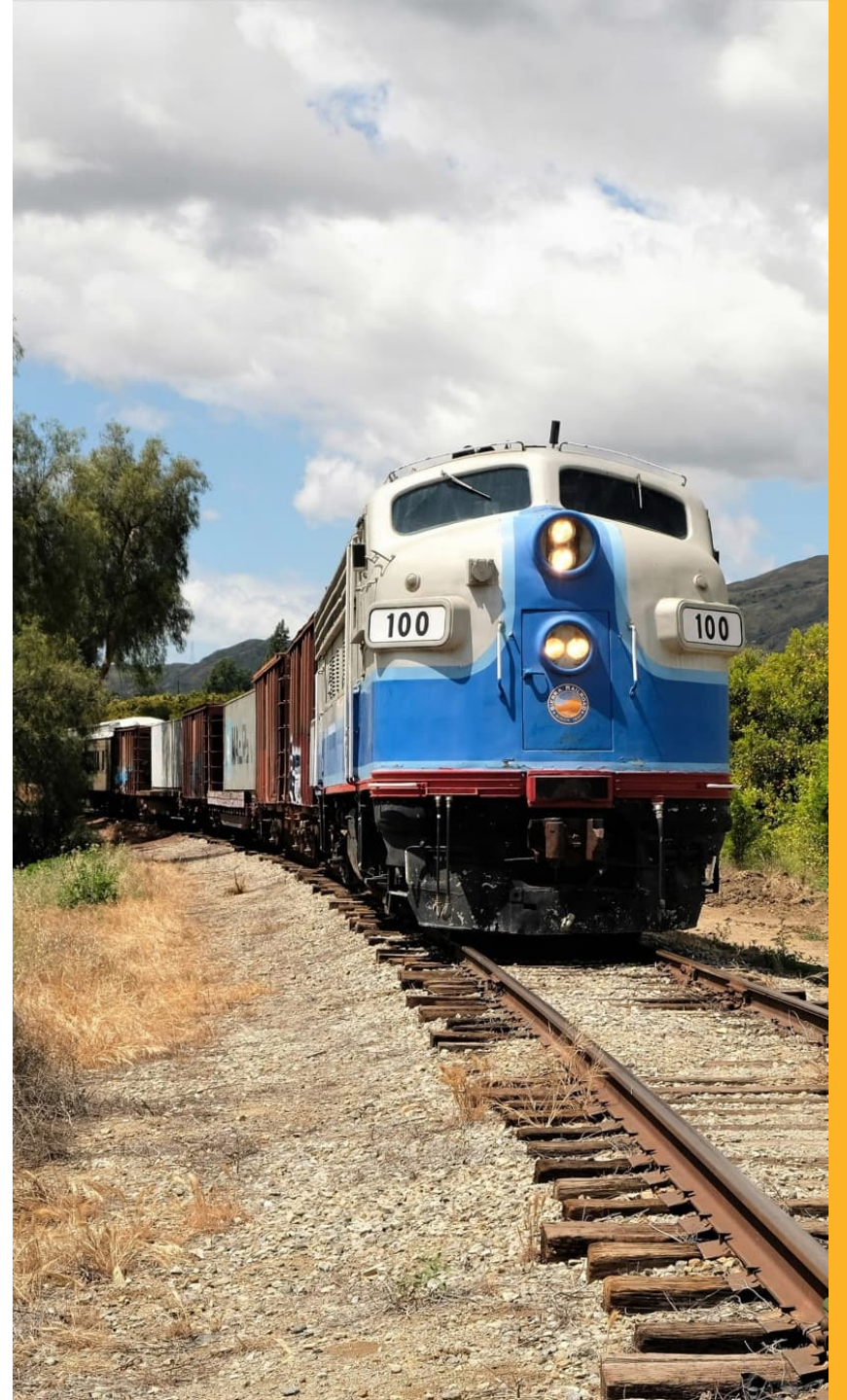


Environmental Analysis



What is a Master Plan?

- A Master Plan is a public document that forms the basis of a project by:
 - Providing background information and context for the project
 - Describing the project's purpose, goals, and objectives that are developed through community engagement
 - Detailing issues and opportunities (e.g. regulatory, operational, economic, safety) and how these are addressed by the project
 - Containing concept designs and design objectives for the project
 - Recommending an implementation plan including funding strategies and a phasing schedule



Conceptual Planning

Defensible Decision-Making Process with Community Buy-In

Project Goals, Objectives & Evaluation Criteria



Develop Design Typologies



Compare Typologies (Alternative Analysis)



Identify Preferred Alternative





Bridge with Trail Adjacent to Todd Road and Pinkerton Road Intersection (DRAFT CONCEPT)



Conceptual Design

Segment

Divide corridor into segments



Define

Define potential constraints



Assign

Develop and assign typologies

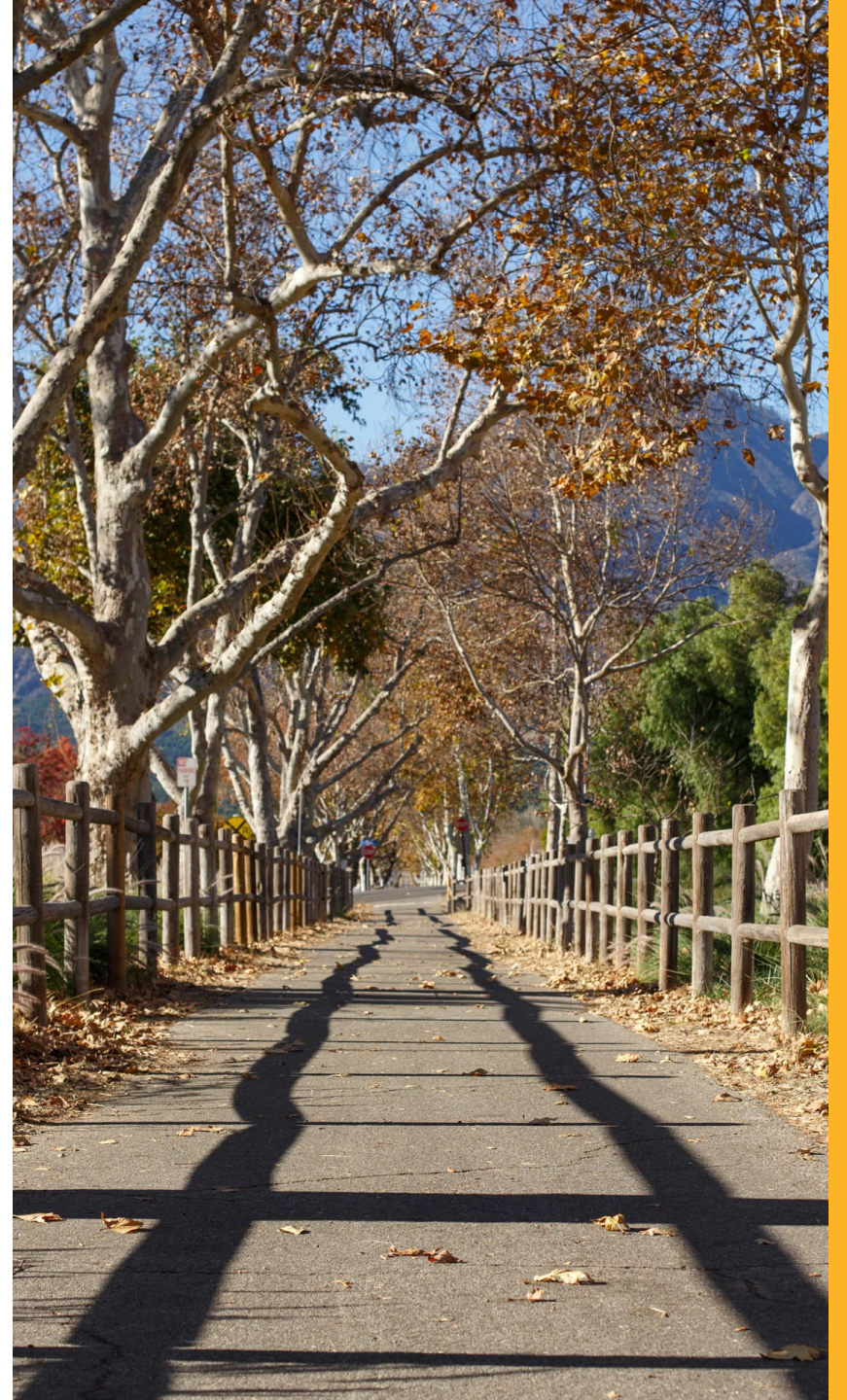


Refine

Conform typologies based on feedback

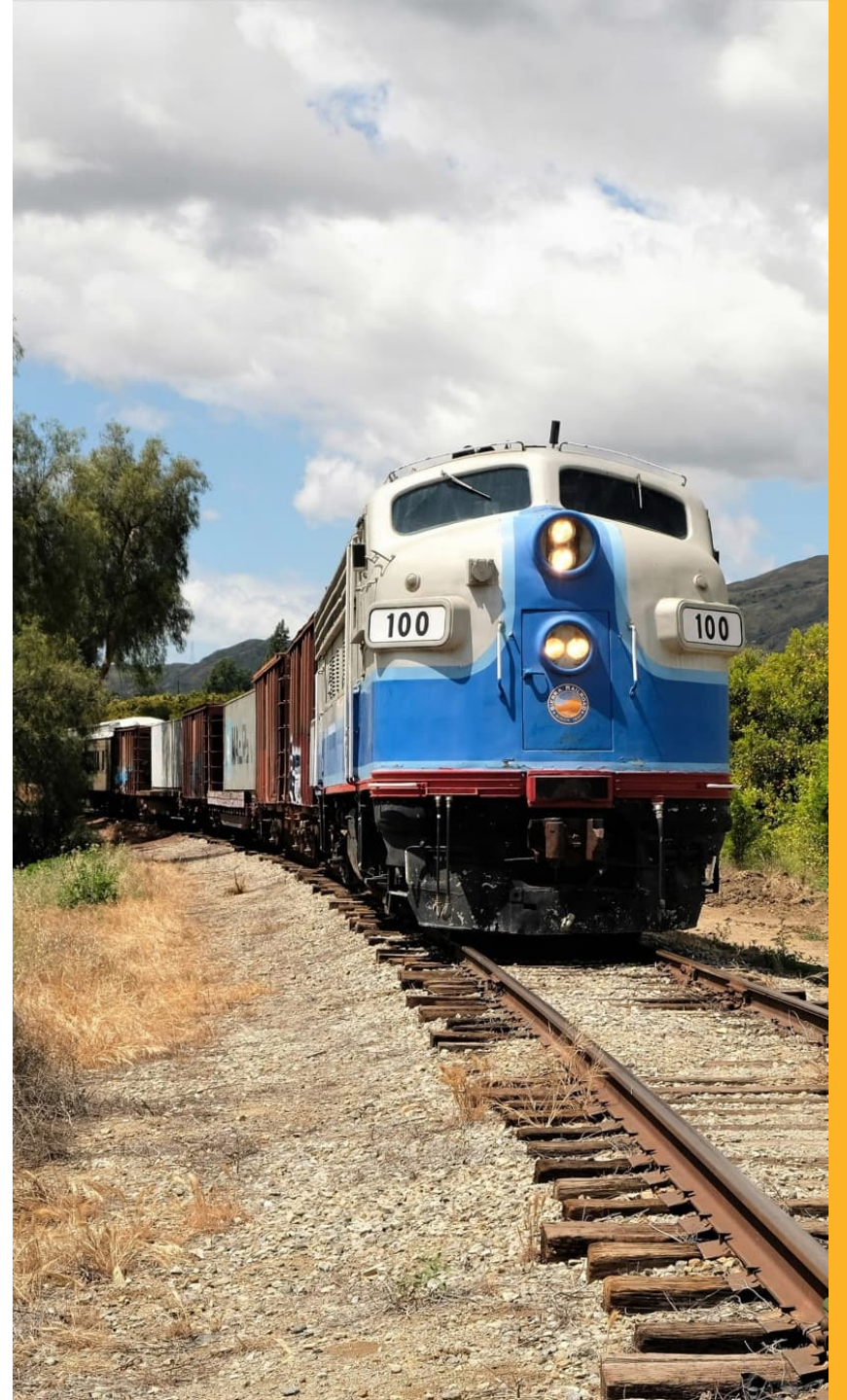
What is a Program EIR/EIS?

- Evaluates the potential environmental impacts of a plan, program or series of actions that can be characterized as one large project
 - CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168
- Informs residents and decision makers about the potential environmental impacts of an entire plan (rather than one project)



What are the Advantages of a Program EIR/EIS?

- A Program EIR can accelerate environmental review of later activities by providing the following advantages:
 - Offers a lead agency more flexibility to consider alternatives and mitigation measures within the broad context of a plan or program;
 - Streamlines approval of future projects
 - Supports implementation of capital improvements
 - Reduces reconsideration of recurring policy issues (i.e. VMT or multimodal impacts)
 - Considers broad policy alternatives and mitigation early when there is greater flexibility to deal with them
 - Reduces paperwork
 - Avoids need for multiple approvals
 - Provides a thorough consideration of effects of alternatives
 - Effectively addresses cumulative impacts





DRAFT CONCEPT



Environmental Analysis



Project Description



Public Scoping



Technical Studies



Draft EIR/EIS



Public Review & Meetings



Final EIR/EIS

Approach to Outreach

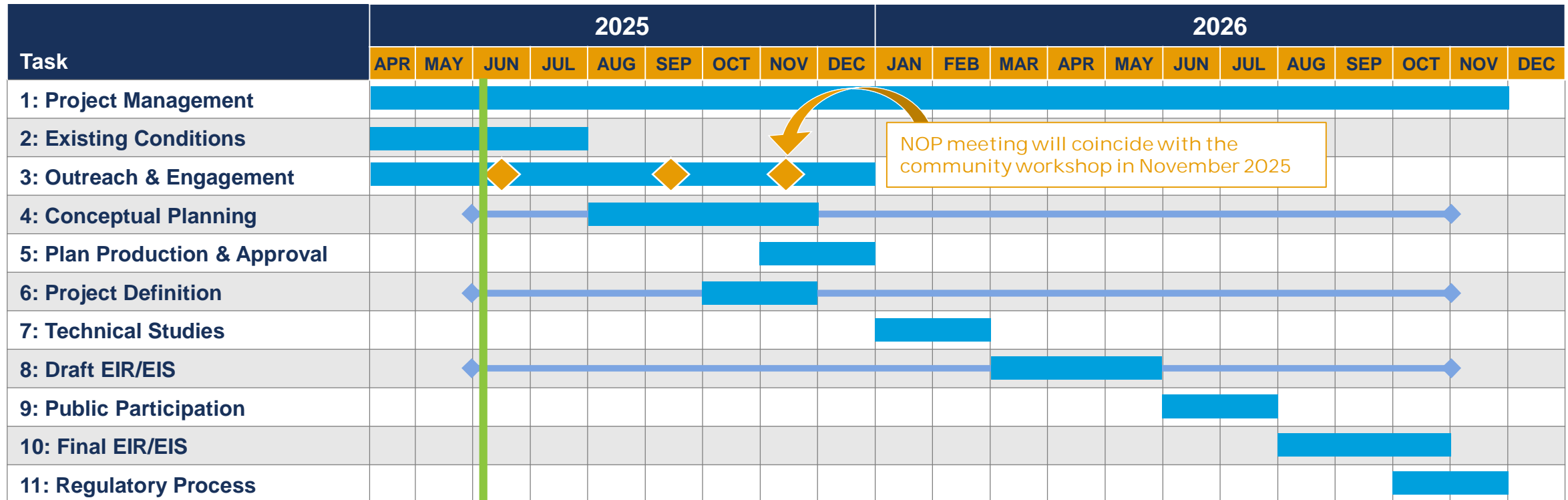
- Advisory Committees
- Targeted Stakeholder Meetings
- Public Workshops
- Community Events
- Digital Engagement
- Public Hearings



Schedule at a Glance



Project Schedule



NOP meeting will coincide with the community workshop in November 2025

◆ Community Workshop

◆ Integrated and overlapping tasks with planning, design, and environmental disciplines



Next Steps



Next Steps

- Existing Conditions Analysis
 - May through August 2025
- Second Community Workshop
 - Late September/Early October 2025
- Conceptual Planning
 - September through November 2025
- Master Plan Production
 - October through December 2025
- Third Community Workshop (Scoping Meeting)
 - Late November/Early December 2025



Thank You

