



NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING MEETING

To:	State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties
Date:	11/17/2025
Subject:	Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan Update

Project Title: Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) Trail Master Plan Update

The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) will serve as the lead agency, consistent with Sections 15020 and 15021 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), in preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the SPBL Trail Master Plan Update project (“proposed project” or “Master Plan Update”). The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to provide responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties with sufficient information describing the proposed project and to request input on the scope and content of the environmental issues and alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR.

Project Location

The SPBL Trail is located in the Santa Clara River Valley in Ventura County, California, where it would connect the cities and communities of Ventura, Saticoy, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru. At its western terminus, the SPBL Trail would begin at Alelia Avenue near the Saticoy Railroad Depot in Saticoy, an unincorporated community within Ventura County, and connect to a planned four-mile trail segment in the City of Ventura. The SPBL Trail would generally run along or adjacent to the SPBL railroad right-of-way (ROW) and local streets and roads for approximately 27 miles until reaching the eastern terminus near the Rancho Camulos Museum in an unincorporated area of Ventura County (see Figure 1. Project Location).

Project Background

VCTC purchased the SPBL railroad and ROW in 1995 for use as a multimodal transportation corridor, including a recreational trail. The SPBL Recreational Trail Master Plan and EIR were adopted and certified in 2000. The original Trail Master Plan established an overall vision for the recreational trail along the 32-mile-long SPBL railroad ROW. After the adoption of the original Master Plan, 0.3 miles of the trail were constructed in the community of Piru and 1.3 miles in the City of Fillmore in 2007, followed by the completion of 2.2 miles in the City of Santa Paula. While these trail additions further advanced the vision of a connected, multi-use corridor through the Santa Clara River Valley, the original Trail Master Plan was not fully implemented. Presently, VCTC is continuing the effort to implement the SPBL Trail, which would require an update to the original Trail Master Plan.



Project Description

VCTC proposes to update the SPBL Trail Master Plan, originally adopted in 2000. The proposed project would establish an overall vision for a trail along approximately 27 miles (SPBL Trail) of the 32-mile-long SPBL railroad ROW. The Master Plan Update would provide a framework for all aspects of the future buildout of the SPBL Trail, including the overall goals of the SPBL Trail, planning objectives, trail design criteria and characteristics, trail alignments, measures to address potential concerns and land use conflicts, a preliminary cost analysis, and an implementation strategy for funding, management, and operation. The SPBL Trail would connect the cities and communities of Ventura, Saticoy, Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru with an active transportation asset that offers residents and visitors alternative commuting and recreational options within Ventura County.

Since 1995, VCTC has owned and maintained the SPBL railroad ROW with support from its rail operator, which is currently Sierra Northern Railway. The SPBL railroad ROW is typically 100 feet wide in most sections, with some limited sections ranging between 30 feet wide and 200 feet wide. At its western terminus, the SPBL Trail would begin at Alelia Avenue near the Saticoy Rail Depot in the community of Saticoy. The SPBL Trail would generally run along or adjacent to the SPBL railroad ROW and local streets and roads for approximately 27 miles until reaching the eastern terminus near the Rancho Camulos Museum in an unincorporated area of Ventura County (see Figure 1. Project Location). While the general alignment of the SPBL Trail follows the SPBL railroad ROW, several alternatives will also be evaluated in the Master Plan Update and EIR.

The Master Plan Update would plan for the construction of a new multi-use transportation asset and improvement of existing multi-use transportation assets in the SPBL railroad ROW. The SPBL Trail would provide bicycle, pedestrian, wheelchair, and other non-motorized transportation travel on a dedicated ROW, with the intent that rail operations would remain active during its use. The SPBL Trail may be separated from adjacent roadways, vary in width, and be paved or constructed from other trail surfaces. It may also include features such as fencing, lighting, landscaping, and signage. The implementation of the SPBL Trail may require activities such as clearing, grading, trail surface improvements, and adding fencing and signage. Although it will be addressed in the Master Plan Update, project phasing has not been firmly established.

Probable Environmental Effects of the Project

All environmental factors under the state CEQA Guidelines will be evaluated in the EIR, including the following:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions



- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Public Scoping Meeting and Comment Submittal on the Scope of the EIR

Pursuant to the public participation goals of CEQA, VCTC will hold a public scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for the public and representatives of public agencies to address the scope of the EIR.

The public scoping meeting will be open to the public, agencies, and stakeholders to receive public comments and suggestions on the proposed project. At these meetings, staff will give a brief presentation of the EIR process and will record public comments on the proposed EIR.

An in-person public scoping meeting will be held:

Date: Thursday, December 11, 2025

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Location: Collector Car Vault
18201 E. Telegraph Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060

Written comments on the scope and content of the EIR during the 35-day review period are encouraged. Please submit comments as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 21, 2025. Written comments should be sent to VCTC at the address or email shown below. The NOP is also available online at <https://www.goventura.org/spbl-trail-master-plan/>.

Contact Information

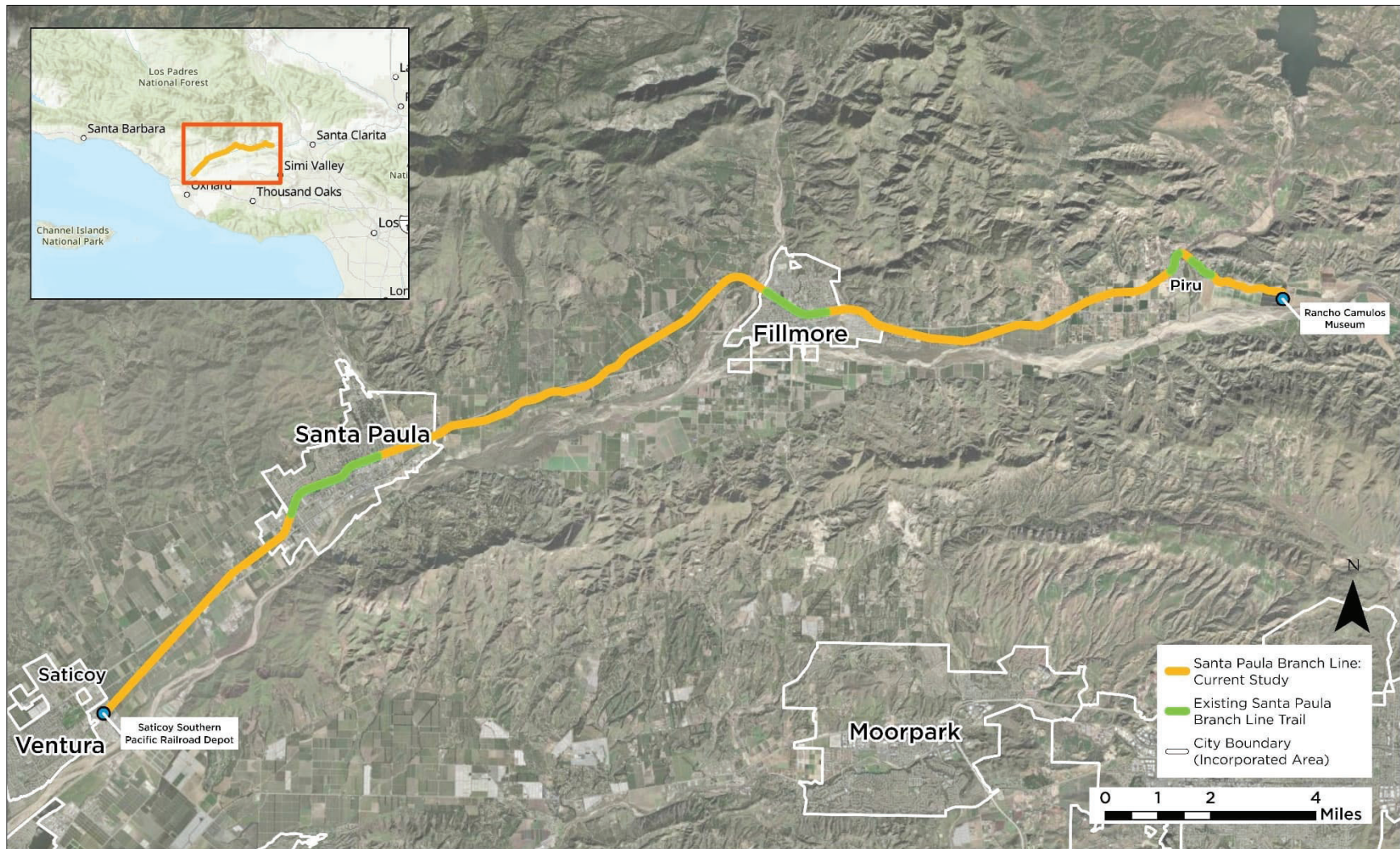
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Signature: Amanda Fagan

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Attachments: Figure 1. Project Location

Figure 1. Project Location



Source: VCTC, 2025