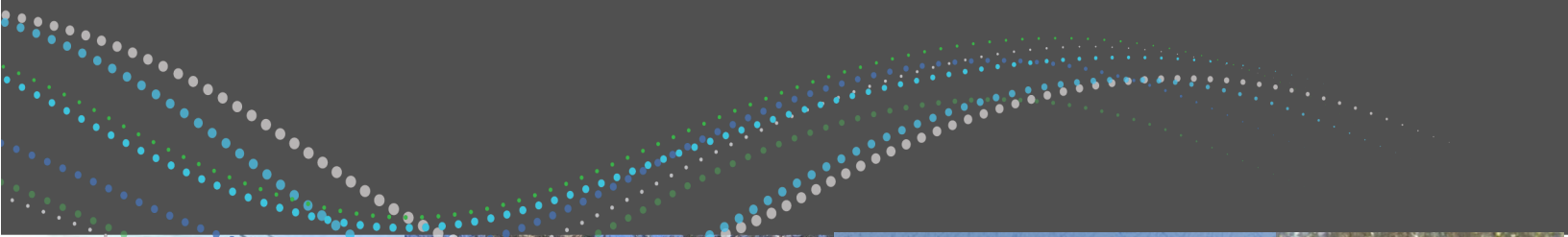




Ventura County Freight Corridors Study Executive Summary



September 2021



Submitted to:



10055.20 | Prepared by Iteris, Inc.

VENTURA COUNTY FREIGHT CORRIDORS STUDY

The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), in cooperation with Caltrans and the Port of Hueneme (Port), studied freight corridors in Ventura County to identify impacts associated with freight traffic, and develop inclusive freight corridor strategies to promote safer, more efficient, and sustainable freight connections that support the economy, social outcomes, and health of Ventura County.

The Freight Corridors Study process was driven by data, literature review, and stakeholder involvement, which informed Study goals and performance measures, identified opportunities and vulnerabilities, and used each previous step to identify priorities. The Study was developed using extensive stakeholder input through the web-based project portal, 30 one-on-one stakeholder interviews, three public workshops, and email and phone communications with port customers, trucking companies, local and regional agencies, businesses and community stakeholders, and representatives of disadvantaged communities.

Goals and Performance Measures

The project goals and performance measures bring values into the process and allow for a balanced review of conditions, needs and solutions. This study integrates measures to assess performance of the transportation system and takes a broad view of the role transportation plays in moving goods throughout Ventura County.

Study Goals included:

- Multimodal Mobility
- Economic Prosperity
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Communities
- Safety and Resiliency
- Asset Management
- Connectivity and Accessibility

Ventura County's Freight Assets

Ventura's freight system supports the County's manufacturing, agriculture, construction, and consumer industries. The Freight Corridors Study surveys the roads, rail, port, truck supportive infrastructure, safety, and other assets critical to freight movement.

Opportunities and Vulnerabilities

The Freight Corridors Study Opportunities and Vulnerabilities section integrates data with stakeholder inputs and literature review into common topic areas to establish a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the transportation system as it relates to freight movement and community health.

IMPLEMENTING FREIGHT CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

The Study intent was to move to a deeper understanding of the role of freight movement in Ventura County, by bringing in other complementary values to freight mobility and safety, such as environmental stewardship, community health, and equity. The Freight Corridors Study is not a funding allocation program, but rather an organizing document to focus on priorities of partner implementing agencies in Ventura County. With limited transportation infrastructure funds, several priorities compete for funding, and this Study provides an understanding of those projects and programs which support freight corridors. Ventura County does not have a dedicated source of freight transportation infrastructure, therefore many of the actions to improve freight movement are components of broader mobility, safety, and connectivity strategies involving passenger travel and mitigation of community impacts from the transportation system.

Understanding the relationship between freight transportation and the economy is critical to future freight transport system decision making to optimize opportunities for economic growth in Ventura County. The Ventura County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy listed “investments in infrastructure and the development of new resources in hazard mitigation” as the first regional economic development goal.

At the same time, the Freight Corridors Study seeks to address the primary negative externalities of freight movement, such as air pollution emissions, traffic and safety issues, noise pollution and aesthetic impacts. Few areas within southern Ventura County are not located adjacent to an agricultural area, industrial area, or major freight-carrying transportation facility. Thus, all communities in the county are impacted by freight transportation to some degree. Historic siting of low-income housing adjacent to industrial land uses and transportation facilities led to disproportionate burdens of the freight system being placed on disadvantaged residents nationwide and in Ventura County. To summarize the findings in concise principles:

- Sustained involvement in the development of transportation infrastructure investment to ensure capital improvements are both freight corridor and community assets.
- Commitment to safety and the transition to a fleet of zero emission vehicles.
- Favor routes that avoid impacts on communities, especially disadvantaged communities.

Potential Solutions

Literature review identified a total of 157 planned projects and programs related to freight movement, which were incorporated into a potential solutions list. A gap analysis comparing planned projects to safety data and issues raised by stakeholders resulted in 25 additional concepts added to the solutions list, to bring the total number of potential solution strategies to 182. Implementation status ranges the full spectrum of the project development process from project concepts without an identified lead agency to fully funded projects in the design phase.

While each solution strategy plays a role in improving freight corridors, the performance measures were used to identify the most effective strategies to achieve the goals of the Freight Corridors Study. The top 18 solutions assessed with the Freight Corridors Study performance measures are designated as “Recommended Areas of Focus” to be emphasized over the near-term of five to ten years.

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF FOCUS

While each area represents a priority for improving freight movement, a manageable set of solutions needs to be prioritized as the next step for major improvement projects. The following actions met the most performance criteria of the Ventura County Freight Corridors Study, and are presented to help focus agencies, elected officials, businesses, community groups and residents on a set of effective transportation solutions that balance freight mobility with safety and broader community goals. Recommended areas of focus are listed in three categories:

Strengthen Existing Freight Corridors

- Controlled Access Facility Improvements
 - Enhanced Truck Route Identification (signage, geofencing, etc.)
 - State Route 126 Westbound to US 101 Southbound Connector
 - Improve State Route 126 through the communities of Fillmore and Piru
- Other Existing Freight Corridor Improvements
 - State Route 118 Corridor Safety Project
 - State Route 33 Stanley Avenue / Shell Road Interchange Improvements
 - US 101 / Del Norte Boulevard Interchange Improvements
 - State Route 232 (Vineyard Avenue) pedestrian crossing
 - Community Traffic Calming Program
 - US 101 at Victoria Avenue Interchange Improvements
 - Rail Corridor Fencing / Pedestrian Rail Crossings

Strengthen the Port Intermodal Corridor

- Rice Avenue Designation of State Route 1
- Hueneme Road Access
- Ventura County Railroad Emission Reduction
- Port of Hueneme Environmental Framework and Policy (Clean Air and Port Decarbonization) and Port Corridor Optimization & Efficiency Projects

Improve Truck Supportive Infrastructure

- Public Truck Parking
- Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility Upgrades
- Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles

Turning priority ideas into reality requires several steps of procuring funding, designing a project, performing environmental assessments and cost estimation and construction. However, regardless of the funding or process for development, transportation system improvement is a cooperative process that includes significant public involvement and a balancing of transportation and broader community goals. The Freight Corridors Study helps in this process by providing early consensus on priorities, focusing project development efforts and providing momentum to projects that meet countywide goals.