



Administrative Report

DISCUSSION ITEM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Steve McClary, City Manager
Greg Grant P.E., Public Works Director/ City Engineer

DATE REPORT PREPARED: March 18, 2019

MEETING DATE: March 26, 2019

SUBJECT: Active Transportation Program (ATP) Project – Supplemental Traffic Evaluation Report of the Functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) During Emergencies

Recommendations

1. Receive a staff report; and
2. Direct staff to incorporate the recommendations of the attached Supplemental Traffic Evaluation Report of the Functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) During Emergencies into the final design of the Maricopa Highway lane reduction.

Discussion

The City Council had an extensive review and discussion of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) Project priorities and design options at the January 22, 2019 Council meeting. Council asked for a supplemental traffic evaluation of the functionality of the proposed lane reduction on Maricopa Highway during emergency evacuations. The evaluation is complete and attached for information. The report concludes the following points:

- The functionality of the four-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) as an internal connector would remain unchanged if it is reconstructed as a two-lane segment as proposed.
- A reconstructed two-lane segment will have the same capacity as each of the six two-lane roadways that provide ingress/egress for the valley, so a reconstructed two-lane segment will not create a bottleneck for vehicles accessing the other two-lane roadways servicing the Valley.
- The proposed reconfiguration of the four lanes into two lanes with bike lanes and parking areas can be designed to provide a similar amount of emergency vehicle parking/staging areas, primarily by providing minimum 40-foot-long parking pockets between proposed landscaping areas. This would permit longer-length emergency vehicles to park within wide bike lane areas and within the parking areas between planters containing trees and/or other landscaping.

These conclusions support the functionality of the Maricopa Highway in an emergency evacuation, with the caveat that minimum 40-foot-long parking pockets are recommended between proposed landscaping areas per above, which will be provided in the final design per this staff report recommendation.

The Ventura County Fire Department, City of Ojai Police Department/Ventura County Sheriff's Office, and the California Highway Patrol have reviewed and are in agreement with the findings in the report. Caltrans has also reviewed and are in agreement with the findings in the report.

Fiscal Impact

The recommended action has no impact to the General Fund. Funding for the supplemental traffic report was included in the ATP fiscal year 2018/2019 project budget, in the Capital Improvement Fund (Fund 31).



Submitted by Greg Grant,
Public Works Director



Approved for forwarding
City Manager's Office

Attachment:

- A - Supplemental Traffic Evaluation Report of the Functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) During Emergencies, Dated March 18, 2019

AllianceJB

Traffic and Transportation
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March 18, 2019

Mr. Greg Grant
Public Works Director/City Engineer
City of Ojai
408 S. Signal Street
Ojai, CA 93024

Subject: **City of Ojai – Active Transportation Program (ATP) Project
Supplemental Traffic Evaluation Report of the Functionality of Maricopa
Highway (SR 33) during Emergencies**

Dear Mr. Grant:

AllianceJB is pleased to submit this Supplemental Traffic Evaluation Report of the functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) during emergencies. This report specifically evaluates the emergency evacuations functionality of the existing 0.7 mile 4-lane roadway segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) between El Roblar Drive and Ojai Avenue (SR 150) as compared to the emergency evacuations functionality of this segment if it is converted to a 2-lane roadway as part of the roadway reconfiguration improvements associated with the proposed City of Ojai Pedestrian & Bike Safety Improvements Project.

Ojai Valley Evacuation Plan – Ventura County Fire Department, City of Ojai Police Department/Ventura County Sheriff Department, and California Highway Patrol have indicated that the Ojai Valley Evacuation Plan, if needed, to evacuate all or part of the Ojai Valley would utilize the four main highway routes (SR 33 N & S, SR 150 E & W; see below). The routes would be determined at the time of the order based on the current emergency, and management of this effort would be coordinated between the agencies. If egress lanes are compromised along certain segments of a route, then an earlier notice would be provided when possible, and additional parallel routes would be used when available (such as using opposing traffic lanes, other available local routes, etc.) The agencies indicated this is a common practice that is not documented specifically for the City of Ojai.



Typical Functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) – Within the City of Ojai, Maricopa Highway (SR 33) primarily serves as a local internal east-west arterial route connecting Meiners Oaks to Ojai Avenue (SR 150) with 2/3 of the traffic oriented to/from Downtown Ojai and 1/3 of the traffic oriented to/from Ventura/US 101. Maricopa Highway (SR 33) to the north is a 2-lane roadway that provides access into the Los Padres National Forest. The segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) between El Roblar Drive and Ojai Avenue (SR 150) is a 0.7 mile 4-lane roadway segment posted 35 mph with 2 vehicle lanes in each direction, center left turn lanes (in most areas), parking, and partial sidewalk connectivity. This roadway segment has approximately 9500 AADT (1300 peak hour trips); fronting land uses including open space, the high school, the hospital, and other various commercial properties; and is the only 4-lane roadway segment within the Ojai Valley except for a 0.6 mile 4-lane segment on North Ventura Avenue (SR 33) in Oak View.

Existing 4-Lane Functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) during Emergencies – During emergencies, the 4-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) primarily functions as an arterial roadway segment providing connectivity to emergency evacuation routes along SR 33 N & S and SR 150 E & W; and the parking areas along this 4-lane segment also have the ability to function as temporary parking/staging areas for emergency equipment. Any emergency evacuees traversing the existing 4-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) would enter this 4-lane roadway segment from a 2-lane roadway segment and then exit this 4-lane roadway segment back onto a 2-lane roadway segment. The four travel lanes with two lanes in each direction on the 4-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) are not needed from a traffic flow perspective because there are 2-lane roadway segments with one lane in each direction on each end of the 4-lane roadway segment. Permitting directional traffic flow to disperse from 1-lane into 2-lanes and then confining it back into 1-lane can actually result in unnecessary diverging and merging maneuvers that reduce safety and slow the overall directional traffic flow. The intersections along Maricopa Highway (SR 33) are the only locations where additional vehicle lanes in the form of vehicle turning movement lanes can be beneficial to the overall directional traffic flow along Maricopa Highway (SR 33).

Proposed 2-Lane Functionality of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) during Emergencies – During emergencies, the proposed reconfigured 4-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) with 2-lanes (1-lane in each direction), bike lanes, landscaping, and parking, will continue to primarily function as an arterial roadway segment providing connectivity to emergency evacuation routes along SR 33 N & S and SR 150 E & W; with the parking and bike lane areas along this new 2-lane segment also having the ability to function as temporary parking/staging areas for emergency equipment. Any emergency evacuees traversing the new 2-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) would enter this new 2-lane roadway segment from a 2-lane roadway segment and then exit this new 2-lane roadway segment back onto a 2-lane roadway segment. The two lanes in each direction on the new 2-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) will be appropriate from a traffic flow perspective to connect to the 2-lane roadway segments with one lane in each direction on each end of the new 2-lane roadway segment. Maintaining directional traffic flow in 1-lane along the entire length of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) will also eliminate unnecessary diverging and merging maneuvers that reduce safety and slow the overall directional traffic flow. The intersections along Maricopa Highway (SR 33) will also continue to be the only locations where additional vehicle lanes in the form of vehicle turning movement lanes can be beneficial to the overall directional traffic flow along Maricopa Highway (SR 33). It should also be noted that, the Ojai Valley Community Hospital and Lifeline Ambulance Service (the primary ambulance service for the Ojai Valley) have reviewed the 2-lane proposal for Maricopa Highway (SR 33) and are supportive of the proposed lane reduction.

Conclusions and Recommendation - The existing 0.7 mile 4-lane segment of Maricopa Highway functions as an internal roadway connection providing access to the four primary roadways (SR 33 N & S and SR 150 E & W) exiting the Ojai Valley, which are all 2-lane roadways. The functionality of the 4-lane segment of Maricopa Highway (SR 33) as an internal connector would remain unchanged if it is reconstructed as a 2-lane segment as proposed. A reconstructed 2-lane segment will have the same capacity as each of the six 2-lane roadways that provide ingress/egress for the valley, so a reconstructed 2-lane segment will not create a bottleneck for vehicles accessing the other 2-lane roadways leaving the Valley. The proposed reconfiguration of the 4-lanes into 2-lanes with bike lanes and parking areas can be designed to provide a similar amount of emergency vehicle parking/staging areas, primarily by providing minimum 40-foot-long parking pockets between proposed landscaping areas. This would permit longer-length emergency vehicles to park within wide bike lane areas and within the parking areas between planters containing trees and/or other landscaping.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide supplemental traffic engineering services to the City of Ojai. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact me at (805)-223-1413.

Respectfully submitted,

ALLIANCEJB



James A. Biega, P.E.
President, AllianceJB, Inc.



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