

## 3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

---

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to describe the proposed Via Princessa East Extension (project) in a manner that will be meaningful to the public, reviewing agencies and decision makers. For purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a complete project description must contain the following information: (a) the precise location and boundaries of the proposed project, shown on a detailed map, along with a regional map of the project's location; (b) a statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project, which should include the underlying purpose of the project; (c) a general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and (d) a statement briefly describing the intended uses of the EIR, including a list of the agencies that are expected to use the EIR in their decision making, a list of permits and other approvals required to implement the project, and a list of related environmental review and consultation requirements imposed by federal, state, or local laws, regulations or policies (*State CEQA Guidelines Section 15124*). An adequate project description need not be exhaustive, but should supply the information necessary for the evaluation and review of the project's significant effects on the environment.

This section describes the proposed project, as well as its location and characteristics, and it includes statements describing the project's objectives and the intended uses of this EIR.

### LEAD AGENCY

Under CEQA, the public agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a proposed project is referred to as the "lead agency" (*State CEQA Guidelines Section 15367*). Because the project will be located within the jurisdiction of the City of Santa Clarita (City), the City will act as the lead agency. Contact information for the City is as follows:

City of Santa Clarita  
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 302  
Santa Clarita, California 91355  
Contact: James Chow  
(661) 255-4330

## RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

Under CEQA, a public agency, other than a lead agency, that has discretionary approval power over the proposed project is considered a “responsible agency” (*State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15381). If the City approves this project, subsequent implementation of various project components could require discretionary approval authority from responsible agencies including, among others:

- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG);
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC);
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB);
- South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD);
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); and
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

This section is not intended to provide a complete and final listing of all subsequent discretionary actions or approvals that are needed, or may be needed, to implement the proposed project. This section is intended only to identify the responsible agencies that may have subsequent discretionary approval authority over implementation of various project components in the future.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed project involves the construction of a new roadway segment between Golden Valley Road and the existing roadway terminus near Sheldon Avenue. The Via Princessa East Extension would be one of the primary east-west arterials through the City of Santa Clarita. The proposed roadway would be approximately 1.2 miles in length and is designated as a Major Arterial Highway per the City of Santa Clarita's Master Plan of Arterial Highways. The proposed roadway would consist of a six-lane facility with a 14-foot raised landscaped median, a 10-foot sidewalk/parkway on each side, and a 12-foot two-lane bike path along the south side. The vehicle lanes adjacent to the median would be 12 feet wide, the middle lanes would be 11 feet wide, and the right lanes would be 12 feet wide. The typical right-of-way width would be 116 feet.

The portion of Via Princessa between Sheldon Avenue and Rainbow Glen Drive that is currently constructed as a half section would be completed by constructing the south side of the roadway. In this section, the roadway would be constructed to a typical right-of-way width of 104 feet, consistent with the original design for this section. The total project area including remedial grading acreage is 25.2 acres.

## PROJECT APPLICANT

City of Santa Clarita  
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300  
Santa Clarita, California 91350

## PROJECT LOCATION

**Figure 3.0-1, Regional Location**, illustrates the location of the Via Princessa East Extension project site within a regional context. **Figure 3.0-2, Project Site**, shows that the project site encompasses 16 parcels in the City of Santa Clarita approximately 2 miles north of State Route 14 (SR-14). The project site consists of portions of Via Princessa between Golden Valley Road in the west and Sheldon Avenue in the east.

The project site is currently undeveloped rural land consisting of hilly terrain with extensive native vegetation. Currently, there are two City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power right-of-way crossing on the site, an aqueduct on the west side of the property, and an overhead power line corridor along the eastern side of the property.

The project site is located on the northeast flank of the San Gabriel Mountains within the central Transverse Ranges physiographic province of Southern California. The site elevation ranges from approximately 1,390 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the southwest portion of the site to approximately 1,830 feet above msl in the northeast portion of the site. The nearest surface water drainage is the Santa Clara River which is approximately 1 mile to the northeast.

Land uses immediately adjacent to the project site include undeveloped rural land consisting of hilly terrain. Other land uses surrounding the proposed project site include:

- Golden Valley High School, south of the project site
- Single-family residential development north of the existing portions of Via Princessa, northeast of the project site
- Vacant land located north of the project site
- Storage and testing facilities for National Technical Systems, Inc., and Golden Valley Road to the west of the project site

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

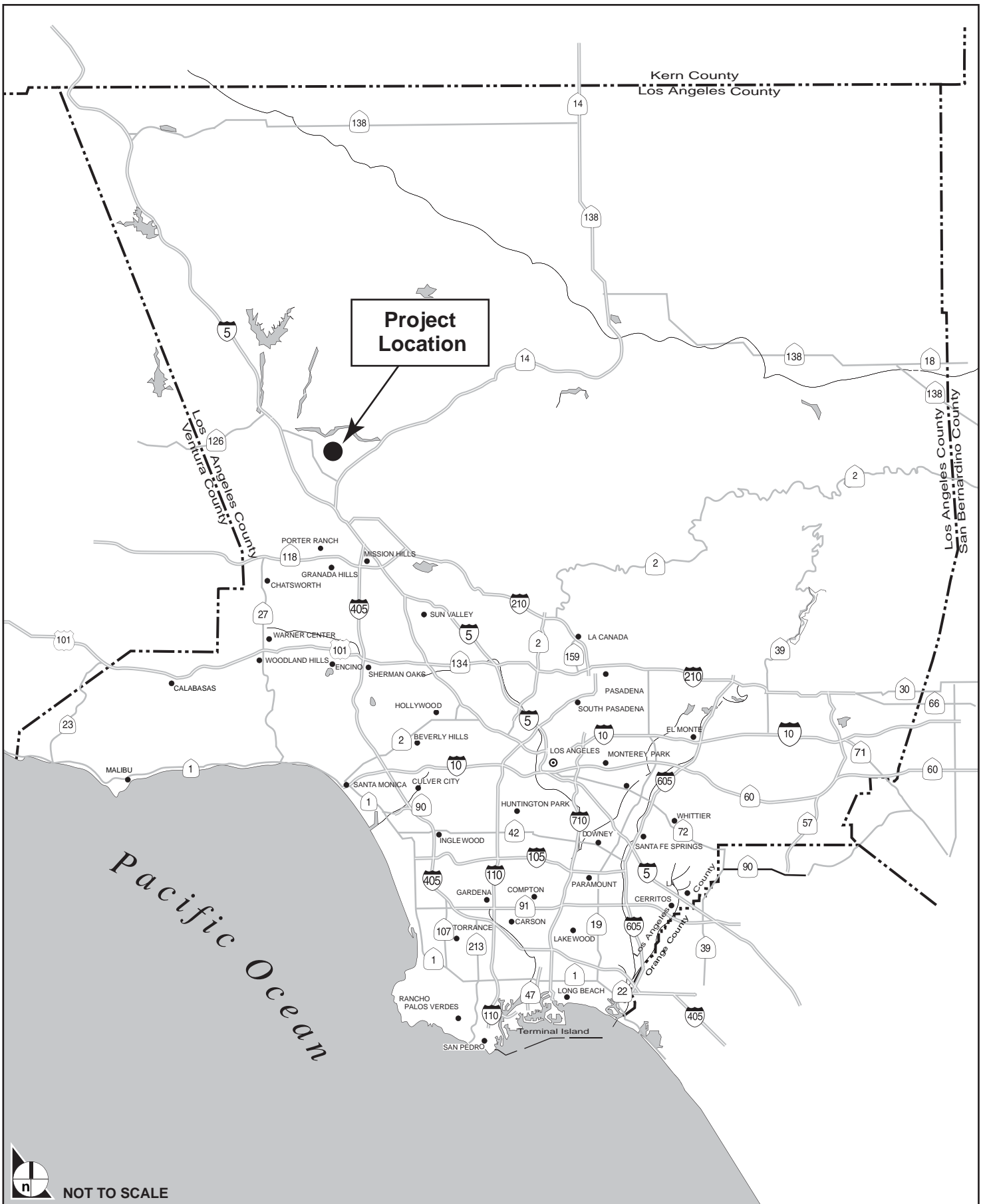
The Santa Clarita General Plan designates Via Princessa as a major highway from Wiley Canyon Road to Lost Canyon Road. Two sections of this roadway have been built including a western portion, from Wiley Canyon Road to Clairbourne Lane, and an eastern portion from Sheldon Avenue to Marsha McLean Parkway. The General Plan also identifies a gap closure segment between the two existing sections of Via Princessa. The Via Princessa East Extension would complete a portion of this gap closure.


The eastern portion of Via Princessa is currently a four-lane roadway that extends from Whites Canyon Road in the southeast to Rainbow Glen Drive in the northwest. West of Rainbow Glen Drive, Via Princessa is currently configured as a two-lane roadway that ends just west of Sheldon Avenue. East of White's Canyon, Via Princessa is configured as a four to six-lane highway.

The effects of the Via Princessa extension were previously evaluated as part of the Magic Mountain Parkway Extension Project EIR, which was certified by the Santa Clarita City Council on January 26, 1999. In the 12-year lapse between that previously prepared environmental document and the present, most of the environmental documentation has become outdated due to the length of time that has passed and changes in environmental regulations. Since 1999, the City's Hillside Ordinance has been revised, biological studies previously conducted are outdated, and standards for reporting for some species have been revised. Air quality standards have been revised and changed and hot spot analysis for PM2.5 and PM10 are now required. Noise modeling previously conducted would be outdated because the traffic numbers and patterns have changed since 1999. Changes to traffic patterns have also taken place as other off-site roadway improvements have been constructed. Consequently new environmental documentation is required.

## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING

The City's General Plan new Land Use Map, designates the project site as BP (Business Park) and UR5 (Urban Residential 5). The City's Zoning Map, shows that the project site is zoned Business Park, Business Park (Planned Development) and Residential Low uses.




**NOT TO SCALE**

SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – August 2010

FIGURE **3.0-1**

**Regional Location**



SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. - August 2010

FIGURE 3.0-2

Project Site

## PROJECT APPROVALS AND ENTITLEMENTS

The proposed project would be part of the City's Capital Improvement Program. The City Council is the City's decision-making body and is responsible for approving projects to be built within City limits. Prior to approving the proposed project, the City Council must certify that (1) this EIR has been reviewed and considered; (2) the EIR has adequately analyzed the potential impacts of the proposed project; (3) it has been completed in compliance with CEQA, the *State CEQA Guidelines*, and the City's Environmental Guidelines; and (4) it reflects the independent judgment of the City Council.

The project would also require the approval of an Oak Tree Permit and Hillside Review Permit at such time as development occurs or when funding of roadway construction becomes available. In order to allow for the proposed development to occur, MC# 09-108 would require an Oak Tree Permit and a Hillside Review Permit. The oak tree permit would be required to determine the oak tree impacts at the time of project development. The Hillside Review Permit would permit the grading necessary to construct the roadway. These entitlements will be obtained at such time as roadway funding is available or concurrent with a development project. Because it is not known at this time when the project would be funded or built and permits expire after two years, it was determined to be more cost effective to wait until such time as construction of the roadway is imminent to secure permits for the project. In the case of oak trees, those trees on the project site that are not currently of ordinance size may be large enough to qualify at a later date.

Additional ministerial actions, such as grading permits, would be required by the City prior to actual grading and construction of the proposed roadway extension.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Key objectives of the proposed project are to:

- implement the goals of the Circulation Element of the Santa Clarita General Plan, including connectivity between Golden Valley Road and Rainbow Glen Parkway;
- improve local access to residential and commercial areas within the City of Santa Clarita;
- improve roadway level of service and the circulation network;
- promote opportunities for new development by extending needed infrastructure systems;
- help close a gap segment in the City's planned roadway system; and
- reduce vehicle miles traveled by creating a more direct route for motorists, eliminating circuitous driving patterns.

## PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The Via Princessa East Extension would be one of the primary east-west arterials through the City of Santa Clarita. The proposed roadway would be approximately 1.2 miles in length and would be designated as a Major Arterial Highway per the City of Santa Clarita's Master Plan of Arterial Highways. The project involves the construction of a new roadway segment between Golden Valley Road and the existing roadway terminus near Sheldon Avenue.

The proposed roadway construction between Golden Valley Road and the existing terminus of Via Princessa near Sheldon Avenue would be a six-lane facility with a 14-foot raised landscaped median, a 10-foot parkway including 5-foot sidewalk on each side, and a 12-foot bike path along the south side. The vehicle lanes adjacent to the median would be 12 feet wide, the middle lanes would be 11 feet wide, and the right lanes would be 12 feet wide. The typical right-of-way width would be 116 feet.

## CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

### Grading

The proposed project would involve approximately 551,590 cubic yards (cy) of cut and 210,530 cy of fill. There would be no export of excess cut material because it would be stored on the project site.

### Schedule

Construction activities are expected to commence in at such time as funding becomes available or development occurs. Should development occur in the near future, clearing and grubbing of the area is expected to begin in May 2013 and last through August 2013. Site grading and excavation would require cut and fill of 762,120 cubic yards on site, as estimated by the project applicant. Grading and excavation is expected to begin in September 2013 and last through January 2015. Trenching for drainage and utilities is expected to begin in February 2015 and last through December 2015. Asphalt paving would follow in January 2016 and last through June 2016.