



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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DATE: February 26, 2025, and March 12, 2025

03

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

ADOPT THE VALLEY CENTER ROAD CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN AND ADOPT THE ACCOMPANYING ORDINANCE AND RELATED CEQA ADDENDUM ([FEBRUARY 26, 2025] – FIRST READING; [MARCH 12, 2025] – SECOND READING UNLESS ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING) (DISTRICT: 5)

OVERVIEW

This is a request for the County of San Diego (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) to adopt the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan (VCRCCP) and adopt an accompanying Ordinance to integrate the VCRCCP into the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances to apply specific requirements for a portion of Valley Center Road. The Ordinance will be introduced on February 26, 2025, and, if approved, it will be scheduled for adoption on March 12, 2025.

The VCRCCP was developed to improve safety and traffic flow considering all road user types- drivers, cyclist, pedestrians, and others- in North and South Villages of Valley Center. The proposed VCRCCP is the result of analysis, public outreach, and engagement with community members and public safety professionals. Together, participants worked to create solutions to recurring issues along the corridor, such as excessive speeding and collisions, to develop a comprehensive plan that reflects more of a village atmosphere (calmed traffic, more pedestrian oriented, aesthetic values) as envisioned in the County General Plan and the Valley Center Community Plan.

The proposed VCRCCP represents a modified corridor plan developed to reflect the middle ground amidst widely varying viewpoints within the community and is consistent with the Valley Center Community Planning Group (CPG) recommendations. This addresses key traffic safety issues along the corridor including a roundabout at the Miller Road/Valley Center Road intersection, traffic signals at the Sunday Drive and Old Road intersections, and other bicycle, pedestrian, and safety improvements including, but not limited to, a new controlled pedestrian crossing, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks.

The geographic scope of the VCRCCP covers approximately 2.5 miles of the road corridor and corresponding right-of-way, from the Woods Valley Road intersection in the south, to the Cole Grade Road intersection in the north. Valley Center's Villages are focus areas for planning new

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development and infrastructure improvements, including transportation network improvements, and providing active transportation opportunities.

The proposed VCRCCP would be implemented through a combination of grant funding, private funding from new private development (through required conditions with discretionary permit approvals and other applicable projects), and through publicly initiated Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, when other funding becomes available. Funding is not being requested to implement the plan at this time; however, adoption of the plan will facilitate opportunities to secure grant funding for implementation and will allow Planning & Development Services (PDS) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to require private development along the corridor to implement improvements consistent with the plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

On February 26, 2025:

1. Find that the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), dated August 3, 2011, on file with Planning & Development Services (PDS) as Environmental Review Number 02-ZA-001, was completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State and County CEQA Guidelines and that the Board of Supervisors has reviewed and considered the information contained therein and the Addendum (PDS2023-ER-23-00-003) thereto dated December 6, 2024, on file with PDS, prior to making its decision on the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan and accompanying Ordinance (Attachment E, on file with the Clerk of the Board).

Find that there are no changes in the project or in the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that involve significant new environmental impacts that were not considered in the previously certified EIR dated August 3, 2011; that there is no substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; and that no new information of substantial importance has become available since the EIR was certified as explained in the Environmental Review Update Checklist (PDS2023-ER-23-00-003) dated December 6, 2024 (Attachment E, on file with the Clerk of the Board).

2. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading): waive further reading of the following Ordinance entitled:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 81.102(gg) OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE OF REGULATORY ORDINANCES TO INCLUDE THE VALLEY CENTER ROAD CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN (Clean Copy) (Attachment C, on file with the Clerk of the Board)

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If, on February 26, 2025, the Board takes the action recommended, then on March 12, 2025:

1. Consider and adopt the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan (Attachment A, on file with the Clerk of the Board)
2. Consider and adopt the following Ordinance (second reading) entitled:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 81.102(gg) OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE OF REGULATORY ORDINANCES TO INCLUDE THE VALLEY CENTER ROAD CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN (Clean Copy) (Attachment C, on file with the Clerk of the Board)

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

In addition to prioritizing traffic safety improvements for drivers, the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan addresses several active transportation safety improvements for Valley Center residents and visitors who do not have cars or prefer to use other modes of transportation when deemed safe, such as walking and bicycling. The County's 2022 Local Road Safety Plan includes ranked priority intersections for safety improvements based on collision rate, collision severity, and Healthy Places Index data. Two intersections within the project's geographic scope are within the top 12 intersections ranked.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

In line with Sustainability Goal 3, the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan (VCRCCP) includes several components that would be anticipated to reduce vehicle trips and greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, including improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and a roundabout. The VCRCCP development process involved engaging the community in a variety of meaningful ways, in accordance with County Sustainability Goal 1. Safety improvements were a main focus of the VCRCCP, addressing County Sustainability Goal 4, to protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in the region.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no current fiscal impact associated with adopting the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan (VCRCCP) and accompanying Ordinance to integrate the VCRCCP into the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances. The VCRCCP is a long-term plan for the corridor that would be implemented through a combination of grant funding, applying conditions (requirements) associated with applicable permit approvals for privately initiated development, and through publicly initiated Capital Improvements Program (CIP) projects when funding is available. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years associated with today's recommended action.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

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ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

Following consideration of several options throughout the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan (VCRCCP) process during four public review and comment periods, on February 12, 2024, the Valley Center Community Planning Group (CPG) voted (9-6-0-0) to recommend the VCRCCP 2023 Option A with one revision: removing the roundabout proposed at the Woods Valley Road intersection. All other components of 2023 Option A would remain per this recommendation. The proposed VCRCCP under consideration was prepared to be consistent with this final CPG recommendation, which entails a compromise solution to address varying viewpoints in the community.

BACKGROUND

Valley Center is an unincorporated community in northern San Diego County. Valley Center Road serves as the main thoroughfare through the South and North Villages and connects Valley Center to Escondido and other unincorporated areas north and east of Valley Center. The Villages of Valley Center are planned for a range of residential development types, commercial uses, civic uses, and mixed-use development which is consistent with the County General Plan and the Valley Center Community Plan. These two Plans include goals and policies that call for Village-specific regulations for roads such as pedestrian-oriented road/right-of-way design, and prioritization of infrastructure improvements for Villages. Policies also include minimizing private road and driveway access onto General Plan Mobility Element Network roads, such as Valley Center Road.

In the years following the 2011 General Plan Update, particularly during the 2017-2018 timeframe, Planning & Development Services (PDS) and Department of Public Works (DPW) staff heard recurring concerns regarding the Valley Center Road corridor in the area of the Villages. Concerns from the community, including the Valley Center Community Planning Group (CPG), reiterated throughout public outreach include:

- The increasing prevalence of excessive speeding and collisions. The collision rate along the corridor is higher than California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) reported averages for both urban and rural areas.
- The need for traffic calming and improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The need for a comprehensive approach to corridor access management.
- The desire to support more of a Village atmosphere.

In response, County staff applied for and received a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant in 2018 to develop a comprehensive corridor access management plan for Valley Center Road in the area of the Villages. The project was initiated in December 2018 with the scope covering the preparation of a corridor access management plan, including addressing traffic safety and overall corridor operations for all road user types.

Consistency with Existing Plans, Policies, and Regulations

One of the focuses of the VCRCCP plan development process was to implement the General Plan and Valley Center Community Plan goals and policies related to Villages and specifically,

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transportation networks. The project was developed to be consistent with the General Plan's Mobility Element Network classifications and associated requirements for the corridor. Within the project's geographic scope, the General Plan Mobility Element Network classifications for Valley Center Road include the 4.2A Boulevard with Raised Median classification within the Village boundaries of the North and South Villages. A 4.1A Major Road with Raised Median classification is applied in the area between the two Village boundaries, from the Lilac Road intersection to just west of the Miller Road intersection. The Mobility Element Network calls for a Class IV bikeway which includes a buffer and a type of physical separation from traffic along the length of Valley Center Road within the project's geographic scope.

Chapter 1 of the proposed VCRCCP (Attachment A) discusses other plans, policies, and regulations consulted in preparation of the VCRCCP. One of which is the Valley Center Community Right-of-Way Development Standards which includes guidance for right-of-way development outside the vehicle travel lanes. The County's Public Road Standards provide direction for public road development and improvements including geometry, turn radii, driveway spacing, criteria for median openings, and more specific direction for various General Plan Mobility Element Network road classifications.

Project Analysis

In addition to outreach meetings and events for the community, the project team facilitated numerous meetings of public safety professionals to inform the preferred traffic safety solutions for the corridor. These recurring meetings included representatives from the Valley Center Fire Protection District (VCFPD), County Fire Protection District (CFPD), County Sheriff – Valley Center Substation, and California Highway Patrol (CHP). Representatives from these agencies also attended many public outreach meetings to discuss corridor issues and solutions with stakeholders.

The VCRCCP is responsive to the community's request for a corridor plan to guide the design of this segment of the Valley Center Road corridor as future public and private development occurs. The VCRCCP would supplement and supersede the County Public Road Standards as applied within the corridor. The final design dimensions, geometry, turn lanes, drainage, and type of physical separation used in the Class IV bikeways is conceptual, requiring further analysis and finalization during the engineering design phase of implementation. However, the component types by location in the VCRCCP are not conceptual, except the proposed traffic signals at the Old Road and Sunday Drive intersections. With the adoption of the VCRCCP, publicly and privately initiated projects along the corridor would be required to be designed and conditioned for consistency with the component types prescribed in the plan by location, unless granted an exception, which in most cases would involve a formal Design Exception Request process, or an amendment to the VCRCCP.

List of Component Types by Location

Chapter 2 of the proposed VCRCCP (Attachment A) contains a corridor plan/map and zoomed-in plan sheets (conceptual designs), depicting the component types by location listed below.

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Consistent with the final recommendation of the Valley Center Community Planning Group (CPG), the proposed VCRCCP calls for the following component types by location:

- A two-lane roundabout at the Miller Road/Valley Center Road intersection with a multi-use path outside of the vehicle travel lanes. The conceptual design is for a 2x1 roundabout, with two entry and exit lanes on the Valley Center Road approaches and one entry and exit lane on the Miller Road approaches.
- Traffic signals at the Sunday Drive and Old Road intersections.
- A controlled pedestrian crossing (e.g., pedestrian signal) at Rinehart Lane.
- Curb extensions (also referred to as bulb outs) at all existing or proposed signalized intersections.
- A Class IV separated bikeway on both sides of Valley Center Road, throughout the corridor. Class IV bikeways require a buffer and some type of physical separation from traffic.
- Extending the raised median throughout the corridor, with median openings limited to signal or roundabout-controlled intersections.
- “No left turn” restrictions at stop sign-controlled side streets.
- A 25’ long mountable median in the South Village for public safety personnel use only.
- Reduction in travel lane widths (outside the roundabout) from 12’ to 11’.
- Extending the 5’ wide sidewalk on the east and south sides of the corridor, to fill in gaps.
- Maintaining the 8’ wide Heritage Trail pathway on the west and north sides of the corridor, with minor modifications at the planned roundabout to accommodate the roundabout multi-use path, and at planned curb extensions.
- Continental crosswalks at intersections where the side street is a public road and where they do not already exist.

Brief Explanations of Rationales for Component Types by Location

Miller Road Intersection Roundabout

This roundabout can improve traffic safety, provide access to existing and future development, and reduce speeds entering the North Village. The typical speeds near the intersection are between 53 to 56 mph, which is above the 45-mph posted speed limit. It is difficult for drivers to speed through an appropriately designed roundabout because the turn forces vehicles to slow down to change direction. From 2019 to 2023, 42% of collisions along the corridor were head-on or broadside (T-bone) collisions. These two types of collisions are almost eliminated at roundabouts intersections. Of the intersections along the corridor without traffic signals, the Miller Road intersection had the highest collision rate from 2013 to 2018 and the second-highest collision rate from 2019 to 2023.

The forecasted 2035 traffic levels at this intersection estimate 31,000 to 34,000 average daily trips, which is anticipated to cause a declining level of service with the existing two-way stop control. Federal guidance shows that this amount of traffic is beyond what a one-lane roundabout can

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effectively handle. To accommodate the projected traffic levels, a roundabout with two entry/exit lanes on Valley Center Road and one entry/exit lane on Miller Road is proposed. The traffic modeling and data-related information can be found in Chapter 3 (Attachment A).

The proposed VCRCCP includes radius area requirements for irrevocable offers to dedicate right-of-way at the intersection to accommodate the future roundabout based on conservative estimates of the area needed. The VCRCCP notes the radius requirements for these can be adjusted by the County Traffic Engineer based on preliminary or final engineering for the roundabout. Future implementation steps would include, but are not limited to, the preparation of a Preliminary Engineering Report to refine the requirements. Chapter 5 of the proposed VCRCCP (Attachment A) includes details on potential grant opportunities for implementation.

Traffic Signals at the Sunday Drive and Old Road Intersections

The project team is proposing two new traffic signals at the Sunday Drive and Old Road intersections after incorporating public input regarding traffic safety concerns about left turns from stop-controlled side streets, increasing use of the Old Road intersection by Park Circle residents and visitors, and speeding. With the construction of the Park Circle development in the South Village, vehicle traffic at the Old Road intersection is expected to grow due to the entrance and exit of residents. Sunday Drive is anticipated to be used as the primary access point to the future Butterfield Trails County Park and a traffic signal will most likely be required to service visitors and road users. Following the acquisition of the park site, the County is in the early stages of planning recreational uses and facilities for this future park.

Controlled Pedestrian Crossing at Rinehart Lane and Continental Crosswalks at all Signalized Intersections

Adding a controlled pedestrian crossing at Rinehart Lane in the South Village achieves a best practice for pedestrian-oriented development by providing a controlled pedestrian crossing approximately every quarter mile within the two Villages. The type of controlled pedestrian crossing at Rinehart Lane would be determined at the engineering design phase of implementation when funded. The pedestrian crossing has two options including a signal-controlled crosswalk and a high-intensity activated crosswalk beacon, or HAWK. This component would improve the visibility of pedestrians and has been shown to improve driver-yielding behavior.

Curb Extensions at Existing or Planned Signalized Intersections and Reduction in Travel Lane Widths from 12' to 11'

These features are included to address what many stakeholders see as the greatest safety concern along the corridor, the prevalence of excessive speeding and the need to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Curb extensions (also referred to as bulb outs) reduce the travel way crossing distance and exposure time for pedestrians by extending the curb toward the travel lanes. Since there is no on-street parking along this segment of Valley Center Road, the curb extensions are designed to relocate the bikeway behind the pedestrian waiting area at the intersection. The travel lane width reduction from 12' to 11' is in accordance with best practices for traffic calming and pedestrian safety.

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A Class IV Separated Bikeway on both Sides of the Road throughout the Corridor

The County's General Plan Mobility Element Network calls for Class IV bikeways along the corridor. A Class IV bikeway requires a buffer and a physical separation between vehicular traffic and bicycles. The type of physical separation would be determined at the engineering design phase of implementation. The need for improved safety for bicyclists has been a common concern in public input. There is currently a Class II bike lane along the corridor, with bike lane striping but no buffer or physical separation.

Extending the Raised Median throughout the Corridor with Median Openings Limited to Signal or Roundabout Controlled Intersections / "No Left Turn" Restrictions at Stop Sign-Controlled Side Streets

A raised median is a curbed section in the center of the road that limits left turn movements to specific locations which was called for in the General Plan Mobility Plan Element Network. The plan for median extensions was also influenced by public input throughout the process on illegal maneuvers within the center turn lane (e.g., passing), conflicting turn movements, and challenging left turns from two-way stop-controlled intersections. The project team and stakeholders considered prevailing speeds and the frequency of collisions at these types of intersections with median openings and left turns currently allowed.

South Village Mountable Median for Public Safety Personnel Use

The inclusion of a section of mountable median to allow for CHP monitoring was a result of several coordination meetings with public safety personnel, including VCFPD, CFPD, County Sheriff, and CHP. CHP was seeking an ideal spot to monitor speeds (radar) in the South Village, with no parking along the corridor within the VCRCCP's geographic scope, and limited road shoulder space on side streets. This feature would also serve the purpose of providing an additional turnaround spot for public safety personnel use only, in emergency situations.

Extending the 5' Wide Sidewalk on the East and South Sides of the Corridor, to Fill in Existing Gaps / Maintaining the 8' Wide Heritage Trail Pathway on the West and North Sides of the Corridor

The proposed VCRCCP would maintain the decomposed granite Heritage Trail on the north and west sides of the corridor and would complete gaps in the sidewalk on the east and south sides of the corridor. The roundabout would entail a 12' multi-use path on the outside of the roundabout for pedestrians and bicyclists who choose not to ride within the roundabout. These features address public input valuing the existing Heritage Trail and calling for improved pedestrian facilities throughout the two Villages.

Public Input

The development of the VCRCCP was informed by over 60 public input and engagement meetings and workshops, including large public workshops, smaller stakeholder group meetings, meetings of the Valley Center CPG and its subcommittees, reaching out to owners/managers of businesses along the corridor, and providing four public review and comment periods to solicit and receive

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input on plan alternatives considered throughout the process. During Phase 1 of outreach, an initial kick-off meeting with the community was held in March 2019.

In response to input received during Phase 1, three project alternative Themes were developed for the corridor during Outreach Phase 2. A Themes Technical Memorandum (Appendix G of the Draft Final VCRCCP in Attachment A) was prepared, explaining the Themes and rationales, followed by a second public workshop and first public review period.

In consideration of input from Phase 2, a 2022 Draft VCRCCP was developed with a corresponding Analysis Report (Appendix F of the Draft Final VCRCCP in Attachment A). As a start to Outreach Phase 3, a third large public workshop on July 21, 2022, included a presentation on the 2022 Draft VCRCCP and facilitated discussions with stakeholders at exhibit stations. The workshop was followed by the second public review period for the project and additional meetings with stakeholder groups.

Following all the 2022 outreach, the project team began the development of new VCRCCP Options, in ongoing collaboration with the public safety professionals referenced above, resulting in the 2023 Options, referred to as Options A, B, and C, in addition to public safety team input on the scoping of additional analysis of emergency response and evacuation considerations, to address stakeholder concerns. In early 2023, Citygate Associates was added to the project team to develop a report on emergency response and evacuation considerations, per a review of the new VCRCCP Options. The 2023 Citygate Report (Attachment B) addresses the 2023 VCRCCP Options and includes a review of the impacts of roundabouts on emergency response and evacuation, a comparison of recent VCFPD travel time data with modeling of travel times associated with the 2023 VCRCCP options, and discussion of emergency operations (including evacuations) in relation to intersection control types considered.

Intersection control types have been a key aspect of public interest. Supporters of roundabouts generally point to the value of roundabouts in reducing speeding and collisions, such as avoiding the most serious types of collisions (head-on and T-bone), supporting smoother traffic flow, reducing the need for starting/stopping and associated air quality impacts, and reducing the number of signals that would be needed. Common input from those who oppose the use of roundabouts has included concerns with large vehicles being able to navigate roundabouts, concerns with drivers getting confused and not using roundabouts correctly, and perceptions that roundabouts will cause more delay.

There were common themes in public input on other components of the plan as well. Commenters valued the anticipated improved safety for bicyclists and pedestrians with the planned Class IV bikeway, sidewalk extensions, and curb extensions. Input often referenced illegal maneuvers in the center turn lane (e.g., passing) and the prevalence of conflicting turn movements where there is currently no raised median; however, some commenters are concerned about closing off portions of the median, limiting left turns to certain businesses and from certain low traffic side streets. Input also referenced components of the VCRCCP contributing to more of a Village atmosphere

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(calmed traffic, more pedestrian-oriented, aesthetic values) in this area, as envisioned in the General Plan and Valley Center Community Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Upon completing the Environmental Review Update Checklist (PDS2023-ER-23-00-003), dated December 6, 2024, staff determined that the Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan (VCRCCP) does not create any new significant environmental impacts, and will not involve substantial changes in the magnitude of impacts identified in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The modifications are consistent with those analyzed in the General Plan EIR, resulting in impacts consistent with those analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Therefore, the changes included in the VCRCCP area do not constitute substantial changes that would require major revisions to the prior General Plan EIR and would not cause substantial changes in the circumstances under which development in this area would be undertaken because there are no new significant environmental impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts.

This project has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the proposed actions meet the requirements for an Addendum to the County of San Diego's (County) General Plan EIR under CEQA pursuant to Section 15164 of the CEQA Guidelines (Attachment E). The County's General Plan EIR Number 02-ZA-001, State Clearinghouse Number 2002111067, was certified by the Board of Supervisors on August 3, 2011. The General Plan EIR and Addendum are on file with the County Planning & Development Services.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the Community: Engagement and Safety Initiatives in the County's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by adopting a corridor plan based on extensive community engagement that will improve traffic safety within the Villages of Valley Center, in addition to supporting the Sustainability: Climate initiative by including plan components that would be anticipated to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation in the Villages.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dahvia Lynch', is written over a light gray rectangular background.

DAHVIA LYNCH
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

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Note: Due to the size of attachments, the documents are available online through the Clerk of the Board's website at www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/bosa.html.

- Attachment A – Draft Final Valley Center Valley Center Road Corridor Concept Plan
- Attachment B – 2023 Citygate Report and 2024 Citygate Report Supplement (Emergency Response and Evacuation)
- Attachment C – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 81.102(gg) OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE OF REGULATORY ORDINANCES TO INCLUDE THE VALLEY CENTER ROAD CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN (CLEAN)
- Attachment D – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 81.102(gg) OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY CODE OF REGULATORY ORDINANCES TO INCLUDE THE VALLEY CENTER ROAD CORRIDOR CONCEPT PLAN (STRIKEOUT/UNDERLINE)
- Attachment E – CEQA Documentation