

Central Services  
Joan Araujo, Director

Engineering Services  
Brian D'Anna, Acting Director

Roads & Transportation  
Anitha Balan, Director

Water & Sanitation  
Joseph Pope, Director

Watershed Protection  
Glenn Shephard, Director

June 27, 2023

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Subject:** Approval of, and Authorization for the Public Works Agency Director or his Designee to Sign a Caltrans Project-Specific Maintenance Agreement for the Rice Avenue / Fifth Street Grade Separation Project; Supervisorial Districts 3 and 5.

**Recommendation:**

Approve, and authorize the Public Works Agency Director or his designee to sign a Caltrans Project Specific Maintenance Agreement for the Rice Avenue / Fifth Street Grade Separation Project.

**Fiscal/Mandates Impact:**

There is no financial impact associated with this board item.

**Discussion:**

In 2017, Public Works Agency Roads & Transportation (PWA-RT) and the City of Oxnard (Oxnard) entered into an agreement to have PWA-RT assist with the Rice Avenue/Fifth Street Grade Separation project (RAGS). Oxnard is the lead agency on the project. The purpose of the project is to improve safety where Rice Avenue crosses the railroad tracks and Fifth Street by constructing a bridge over both the tracks and Fifth Street, eliminating the at-grade conflict between vehicles and approximately 25 trains per day. The project will also enhance traffic flow on Rice Avenue, a heavy freight corridor between the Port of Hueneme and US-101. This safety project is fully funded through the State Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) as part of Senate Bill 1, as well as other funding. Project partners and stakeholders include the City of Oxnard, The County of Ventura (County), Caltrans, Ventura County Transportation Commission, and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR).



The project proposes to construct a bridge on Rice Avenue to span over the UPRR railroad tracks and Fifth Street (SR-34). At the crossing, in addition to a new bridge, Rice Avenue will be realigned to the east and include ramps to connect Rice Avenue with Fifth Street.

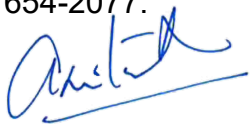
Caltrans requires that a Project-Specific Maintenance Agreement be established to ensure maintenance and upkeep of the new facility. Once constructed, the State of California will be assigned ownership of the new bridge structure. The agreement defines that the State will maintain “below” the bridge deck including the superstructure, piers, and abutments, while the County will maintain “above” the bridge deck. This includes the new roadway surface, drainage, slope paving, the embankments, bridge railing, lighting, striping, signage, a portion of the signal, and sidewalks. The existing County portion of Rice Avenue is currently included in the County’s Road system. Once the new overcrossing is constructed, ongoing maintenance will be performed by PWA-RT.

Note that the bridge over the UPRR tracks and Fifth Street will span two jurisdictions: north of Fifth Street, the bridge is within Oxnard city jurisdiction, and south of Fifth Street it is within County jurisdiction. The County will only maintain “above the bridge deck” within County jurisdiction, and Oxnard will maintain their portion. Oxnard has already entered into an agreement with Caltrans to maintain their portion of the bridge.

The proposed maintenance agreement between the County and Caltrans does not have a sunset date, however pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans, Oxnard, and the County, Caltrans will recommend that the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopt Rice Avenue as State Highway Route 1. Once the MOU conditions are met and the CTC adopts the roadway, the State will take ownership of the overcrossing and the County will no longer be required to maintain Rice Avenue or the “above” deck components. There is no schedule yet for this action.

This item has been received by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller’s Office, and the County Counsel.

If you have any questions concerning this item, please contact the undersigned at (805) 654-2077.



ANITHA BALAN, PE  
Director  
Roads & Transportation

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 – Project Overview and Vicinity Map  
Exhibit 2 – Caltrans Project Specific Maintenance Agreement

