



Orange County Transportation Authority

Update on the Interstate 5 El Toro Road Interchange Improvement Project



Project Location





Measure M2 (M2) Freeway Program Context

- During development of M2, the Interstate 5 (I-5) El Toro Road interchange was a top priority for the cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest (Cities)
- M2 Ordinance (approved by voters on November 7, 2006)
 - Project D – I-5 local interchange upgrades:
 - Update and improve key I-5 interchanges, such as Avenida Pico, Avery Parkway, **El Toro Road**, La Paz Road, Ortega Highway, and others to relieve street congestion around older interchanges and on-ramps. Specific improvements will be subject to approved plans developed in cooperation with local jurisdictions and affected communities
- Next 10 Delivery Plan (2025 Update)
 - I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project anticipated to be environmentally cleared by 2026 and shelf-ready for future advancement



Project Background and Timeline

- February 2015 – Project study report considered 15 alternatives; four build alternatives were recommended for further study
- May 2017 – California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) began Project Approval/Environmental Document (PA/ED) phase
- August 2018 to February 2019 – Design and right-of-way (ROW) impact workshops held between Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Caltrans, and the Cities. Two of four build alternatives were removed from further study
- April to May 2019 – Public circulation and review of draft environmental document with two build alternatives; no consensus reached on preferred alternative
- October 2021 – OCTA completed an alternatives assessment study coordinated with the Cities and Caltrans that studied seven alternatives

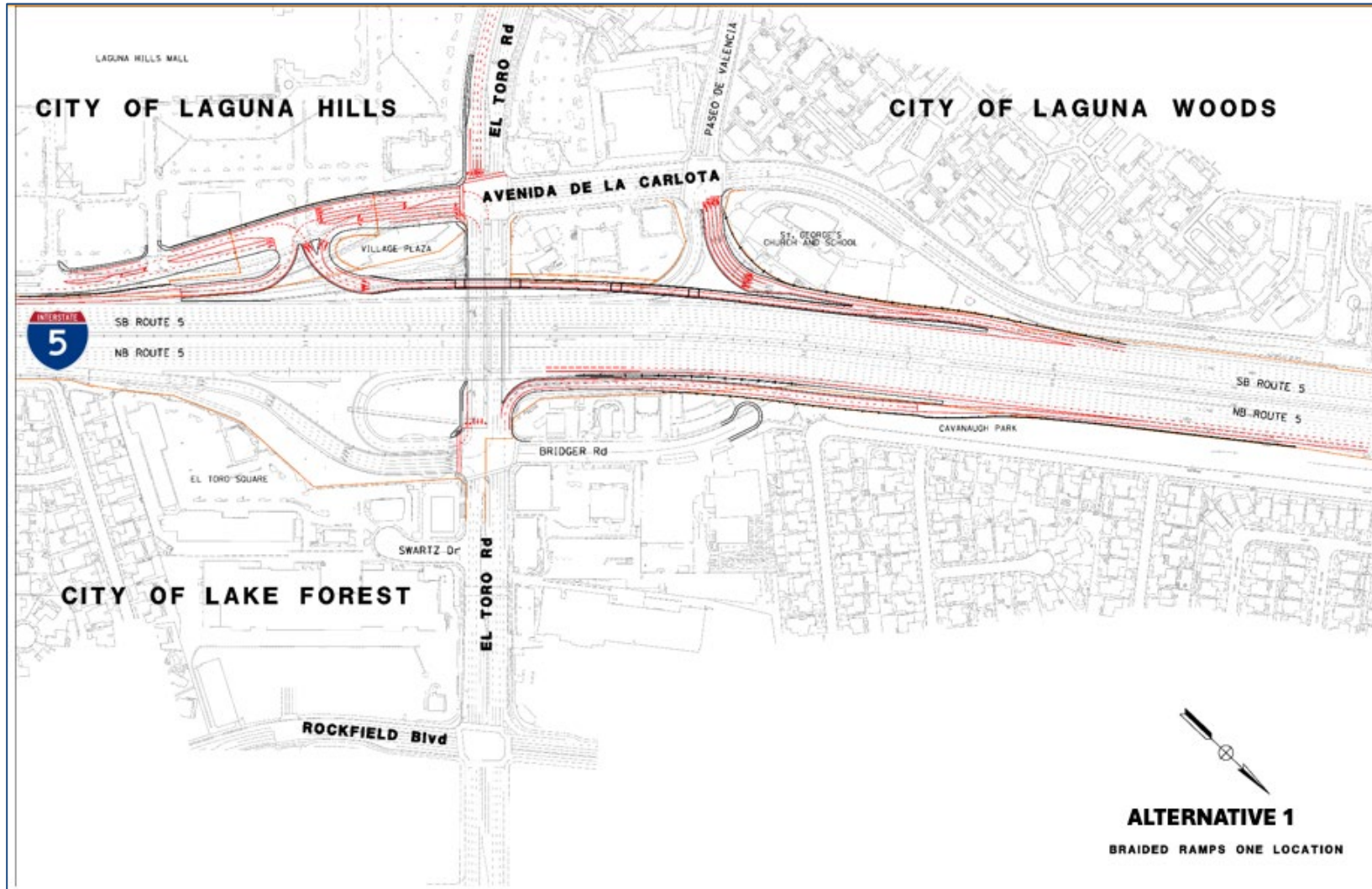


Project Background and Timeline (cont.)

- March 2022 – OCTA, Cities, and Caltrans reach consensus on two alternatives to move forward with the PA/ED phase
- January 2023 – Caltrans and OCTA restart PA/ED phase
- Project update to OCTA Board of Directors in June 2023 – Project update to the city councils of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest in June/July 2023
- Public scoping meeting – in-person: July 2023; virtual: August 2023
- August 2023 to March 2024 – Public comment period and public summary report completed
- January 2026 - Completed preliminary engineering and cost estimates



Alternative 1: Braided Ramps



**Total Cost: \$310M
(in 2025 Dollars)**



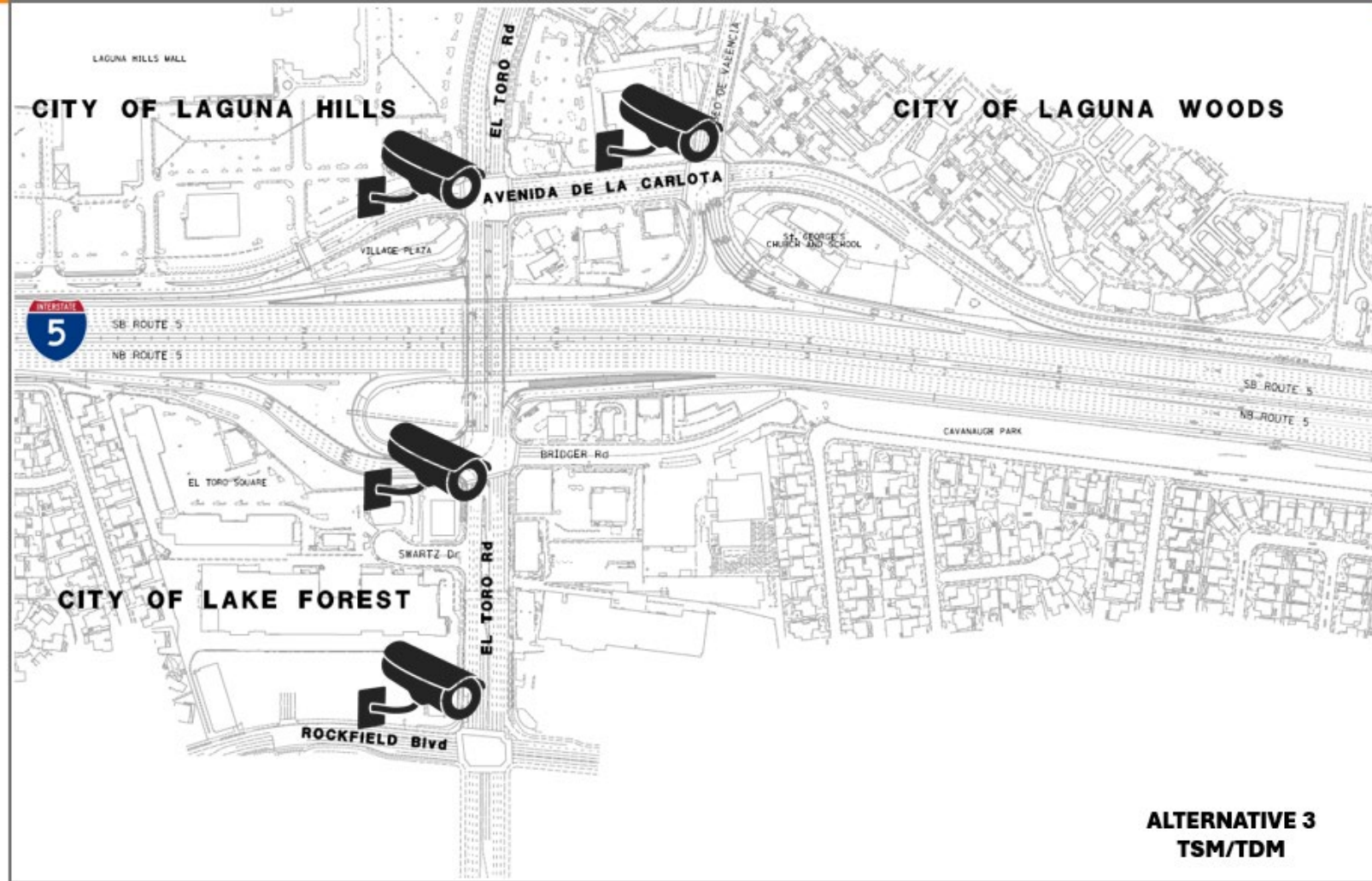
Alternative 2: Flyover with Roundabout



Considered
and
Eliminated



Alternative 3: Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM)



**Total Cost: \$33M
(in 2025 Dollars)**



Public Outreach

- Public Hearings
 - One in-person and one virtual public hearing
 - Online and print newspaper ads
 - Direct mail postcards
- Presentations
 - City council updates
 - Stakeholder briefings
- Collateral
 - Project webpage, email alerts, social media, flyers





Next Steps

- Complete environmental technical studies – spring 2026
- Approval of draft PA/ED and beginning of public circulation – July 2026
- Public hearing – August 2026
- Select preferred alternative – October 2026
- Approval of final PA/ED – late 2026/early 2027