

STATE ROUTE 46E comprehensive corridor study

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY



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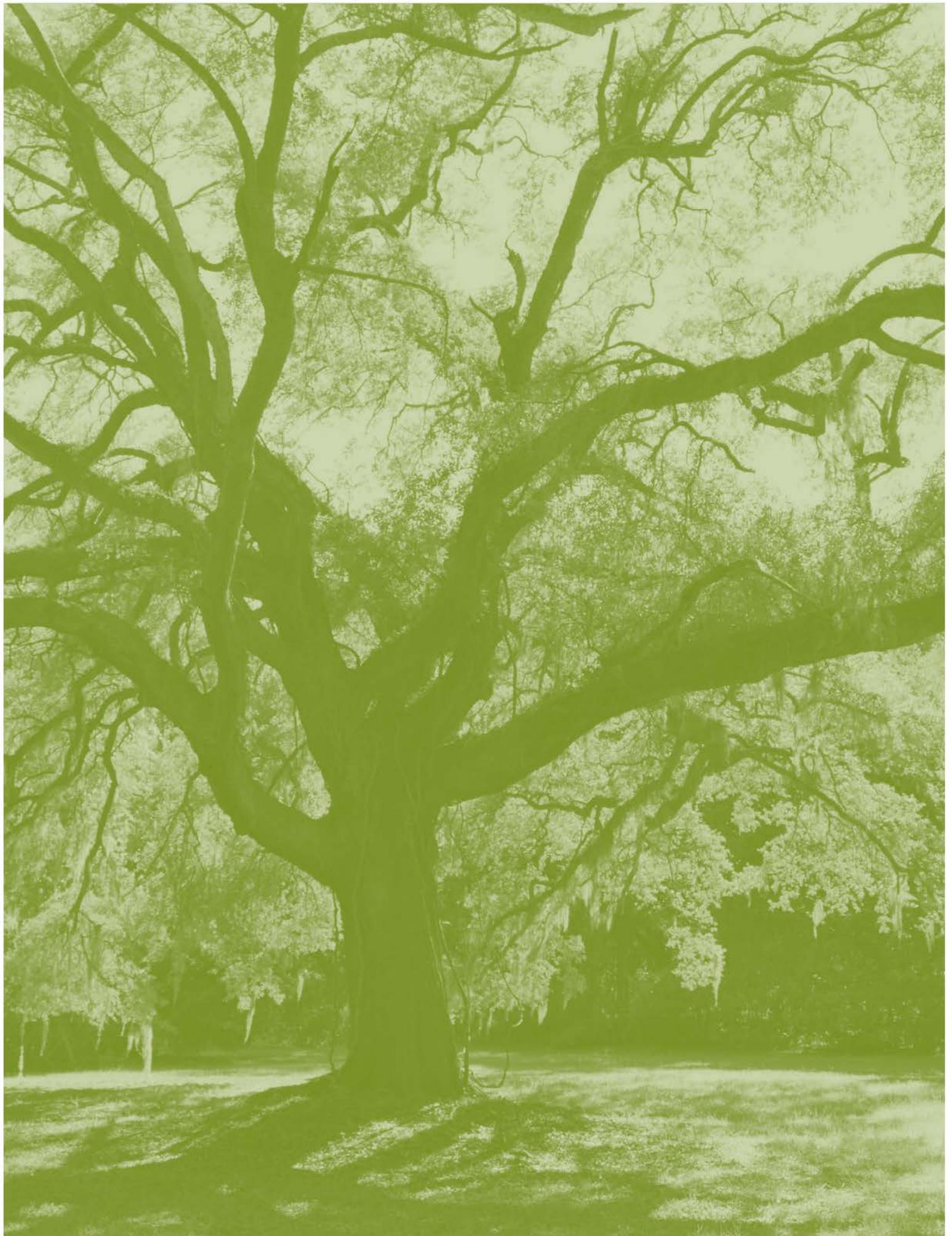
Caltrans District 5

public involvement summary

AUGUST 2009

table of contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Study Team Process	4
Participating Groups	7
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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	9
Development Process	9
Public Engagement Methods	11
Public Involvement Evaluation	13
<hr/>	
MAJOR FINDINGS	15
Workshop Findings	15
Study Team Findings	20
Comprehensive Corridor Study Findings	20
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APPENDICES	



introduction

State Route 46 is a major goods movement facility that connects Fresno to the coast and supports a variety of travel types including regional and interregional traffic. Goods movement demand is driven by the large agricultural industry in the Central and Salinas Valleys, and the Central Coast provides recreational opportunities for travelers throughout the State. As growth continues on a statewide and regional basis, the need for more efficient transportation will increase, and coordinated multi-agency land use and transportation decisions will become essential.

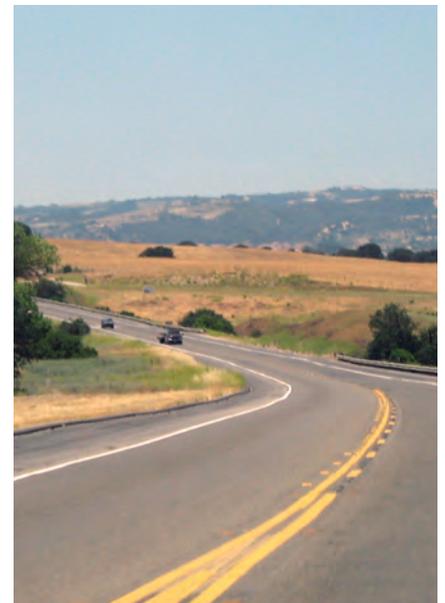
In the Spring of 2007, MIG, Inc. began working with Caltrans and three local partner agencies to develop a Comprehensive Corridor Study for a five-mile section of State Route 46 East (SR 46E) within the urbanized area of the City of Paso Robles. The segment

of highway extends from the US 101/SR 46E interchange 5 miles east to Jardine Road.

MIG's existing on-call contract with Caltrans for public involvement and strategic planning services provided an excellent opportunity to reinvigorate and facilitate the multi-agency planning process for the 5-mile section of SR 46 East.

The SR 46 East Comprehensive Corridor Study represents the culmination of an 18-month planning process that featured significant negotiation and collaborative decision-making between Caltrans, the City of Paso Robles, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) and San Luis Obispo County, as well as an extensive public involvement process.

The 20 year vision for the SR 46 East Corridor identifies short- and



long-term improvement strategies that will be incorporated into a variety of other related planning documents including:

- Caltrans Corridor System Management Plan for SR 46
- SLOCOG Regional Transportation Plan
- San Luis Obispo County County Salinas River Area Plan
- City of Paso Robles General Plan Update: Traffic Circulation Element

The options presented in the plan have been reviewed and developed in coordination with these agencies

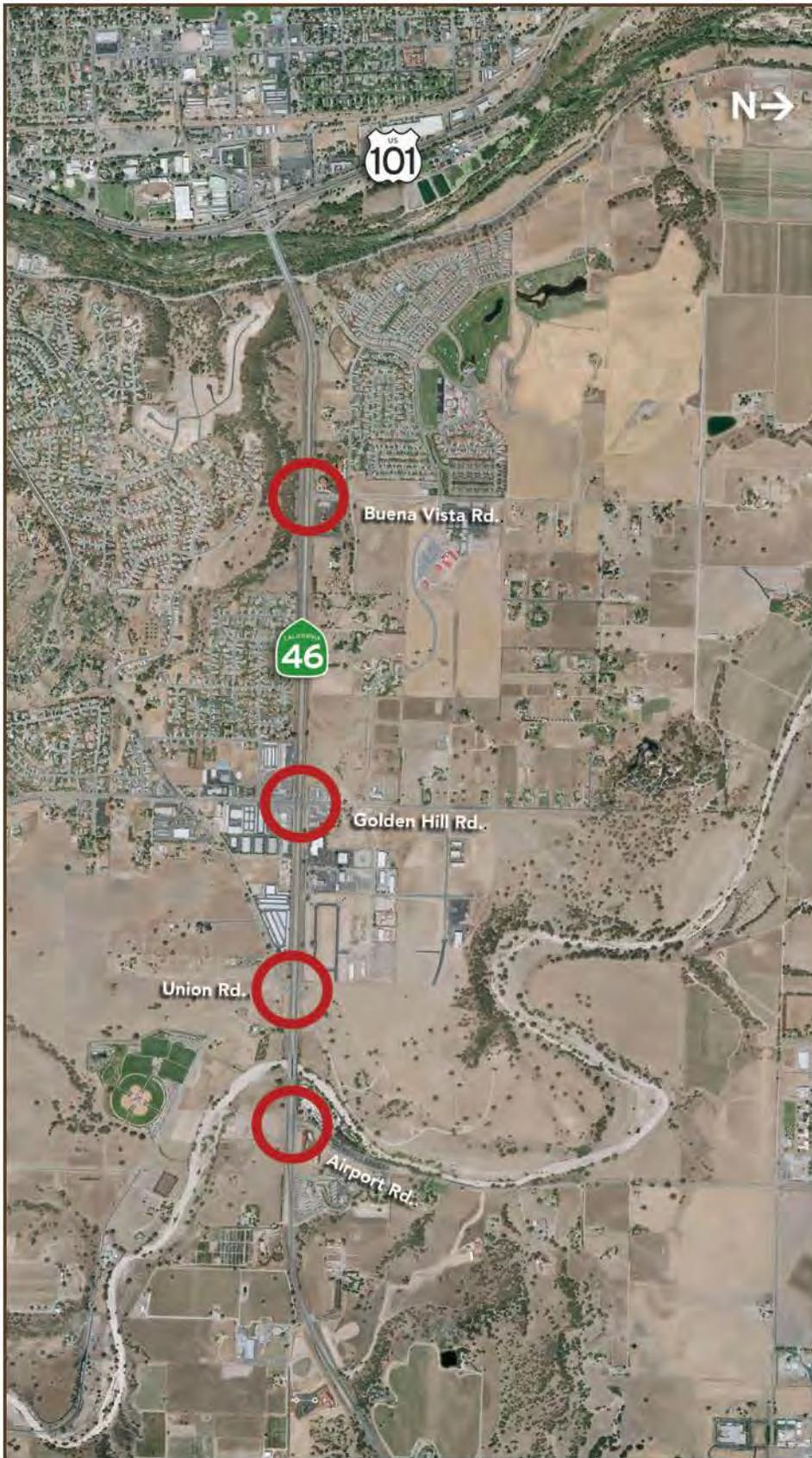
and are complementary to their respective planning documents.

The Comprehensive Corridor Study identifies improvement concepts and strategies that will enhance local connectivity, improve sense of place for the community, reduce congestion, enhance goods movements and improve safety. A phased approach, as preferred by local agencies, is identified to help with the development of a strategic funding strategy.

RESULTS

Measuring the success of Public Involvement activities can take many forms and is often a quantitative measure of how many meetings happened and how many people attended. However, such measures often miss the overall and true results of such a process. In this process, the variety of engagement activities have yielded a completed planning document publically endorsed by all stakeholder agencies and a renewed working relationship between the agencies and staff that together build a strong foundation of support for





Comprehensive Corridor Study Area

future coordinated transportation and land use planning efforts.

STUDY TEAM PROCESS

The Study Team was first convened in May 2007 and met 10 times over the next 18 months. Initial meetings focused on refining project and process goals. With these agreements in place, a public engagement strategy was developed and implemented between December 2007 and March 2009. Following the public workshops, the Study Team continued meeting to develop a series of conceptual improvement packages. The development of

the improvement packages was designed to address the future congestion-related deficiencies as well as improving the safety within the corridor. Public and stakeholder input identified values and interests for the corridor, and these were incorporated in the decision-making process and overall Comprehensive Corridor Study document that was finalized in the winter of 2008.

The Draft Comprehensive Corridor Study was available for public comment and review from March 10 – April 10, 2009, and was approved by the SLOCOG Board on April 8th, 2009 and by Caltrans with final signatures on June 19th, 2009.

Goals, Issues and Problem Statement

Early Study Team meetings focused on finalizing a Goals, Issues and Problem Statement as well as establishing goals for the corridor study process itself. The previously drafted Goals, Issues and Problem Statement was reviewed by the Study Team and revised to reflect the agreed upon goals, issues and problems.



Study Team meetings led to agreement on the overall corridor goals. These goals would drive the subsequent public involvement process and corridor improvement design process and are listed below.

corridor goals:

- Separating local, regional and interregional traffic
- Ensuring goods movement
- Fostering connectivity to, across and along 46E
- Increasing safety and efficiency
- Providing a decent level of service
- Promoting multi-modal movement
- Enhancing community cohesion, character and quality of life.

In addition to Corridor and Process goals, the Study Team agreed that the Comprehensive Corridor Study and public engagement efforts would focus on the following key issues.

study issues:

- Consistency/Certainty
- Funding/Financing
- Delay/Diversion
- Safety
- Growth
- Level of Service (Operations)
- Highway Daily Traffic Volumes and Peak Hour
- Design Standards

In addition, facilitated Study Team sessions produced a series of agreed upon Comprehensive Corridor Study Process goals. These goals, listed below, provided a strong foundation for collaborative problem solving and coordination that was a hallmark of the Comprehensive Corridor Study process.

process goals:

- Ensuring coordination with existing planning processes and current projects
- Providing guidance for near-term decisions
- Developing sustainable agreements over time
- Ensuring flexibility
- Creating a fundable, feasible and phaseable project for the short, medium and long term
- Ensuring environmental enhancement, preservation and stewardship
- Gaining stakeholder acceptance
- Developing a well-designed solution

PARTICIPATING GROUPS

In addition to the Study Team, two other groups were formed to address issues on an as-needed basis.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

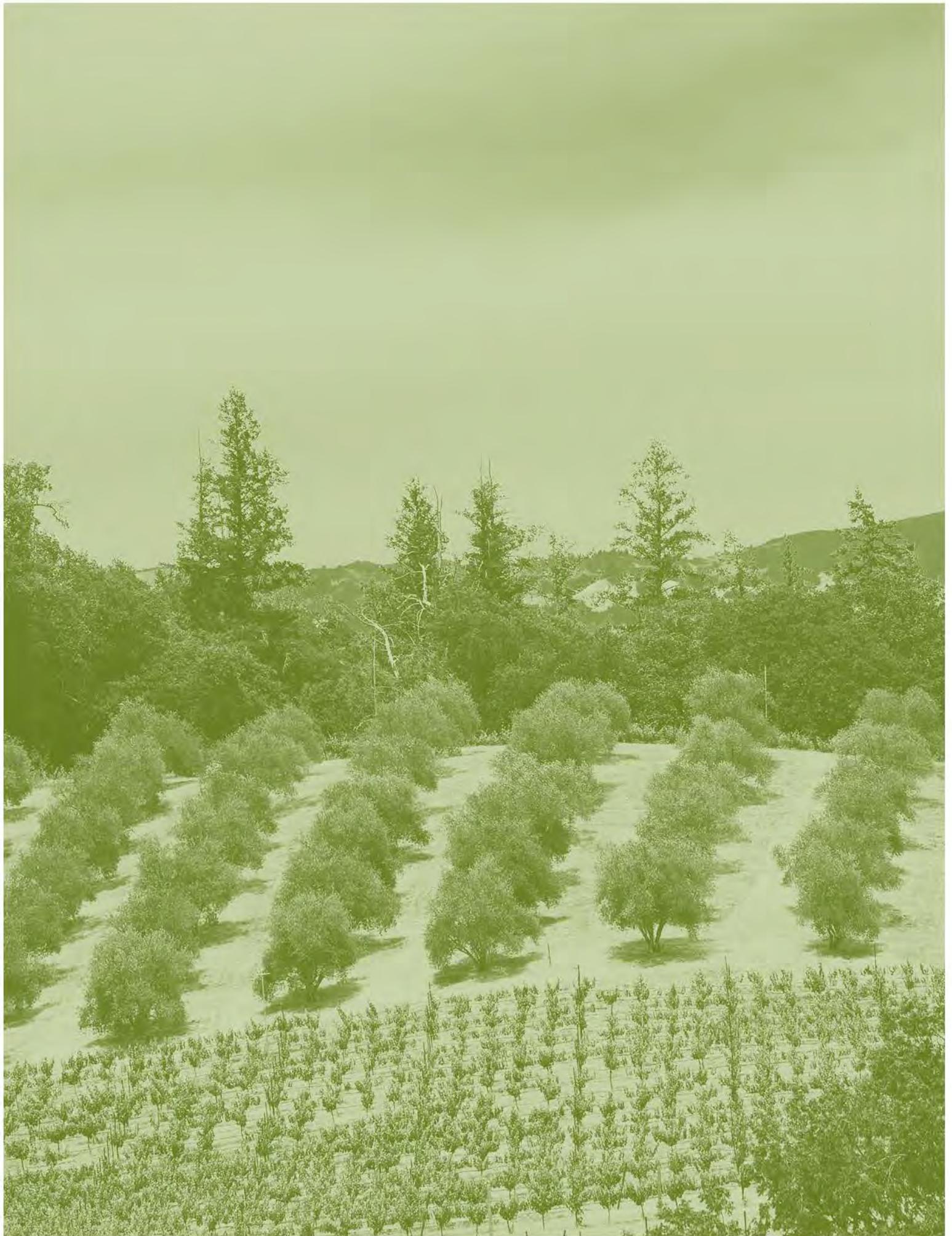
Recognizing that many of the design issues were highly technical, a sub-committee of the Study Team, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), was formed to meet on an as-needed basis to resolve technical issues and make recommendations to the Study Team. Overall, the TAC met at strategic intervals during the process, addressing a range of issues including Level of Service designation, performance evaluation criteria, traffic projection methodology and improvement concept designs. Technical staff from each Study Team agency were appointed to the TAC.

Steering Committee

At the outset of the Comprehensive Corridor Study process, relations between Study Team member agencies were contentious and timely collective decision-making



appeared to be a potential challenge. A Steering Committee comprised of high ranking officials from each agency was established to serve as a decision-making body that would resolve any issues that the Study Team could not agree on. The committee was established to meet on an as-needed basis. As the process moved forward, intractable problems did not stall the process and the Steering Committee seldom met. However, the establishment of the Steering Committee provided a clear decision-making structure and was a valuable addition to the overall project.



public engagement

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Comprehensive Corridor Study is required to incorporate public feedback into preferred design concepts. In the fall of 2007, the Study Team reviewed and finalized a public engagement strategy designed to generate this input that would be carried out in coordination with MIG, Inc.

In addition to input about design, the public engagement process was designed to increase local understanding of the need for corridor improvements, the Caltrans planning and the Comprehensive Corridor Study process as well as improvement strategies such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Travel Demand Management (TDM) and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS).

The process was designed with the following goals in mind:

goals:

- High-Quality Input and Participation
- Diversity
- Education
- Accuracy
- Reach
- Inclusivity
- Impact

The Study Team developed the following Key Messages and Questions to guide the Public Engagement Process.

key messages:

Highway 46E corridor improvements will result in:

- Long-term safety
- Increased traffic capacity
- A stronger local economy
- Improved local, regional and inter-regional circulation
- Increased mobility and quality of life
- Improved North/South connectivity across 46E
- Corridor improvements are needed and developing them now will reduce traffic delay and minimize safety issues.
- The consequences of inaction are significant.
- Land use and transportation decisions can support quality of community and cohesiveness while reducing sprawl.
- Buena Vista closure will happen as late as possible.

key questions for the public:

- Which of the technically feasible solutions are most acceptable or desirable?
- What are the Pros/Cons and tradeoffs of the different concepts (including no change)?
- How can corridor improvements enhance the community's quality of life?
- What is the value to you of a well-functioning infrastructure?

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Elected Official Briefings and Stakeholder Interviews

Study Team members and MIG, Inc. reviewed the process design with elected officials and stakeholders to confirm the appropriateness of the public engagement approach and identify other key opportunities for increasing awareness about the process and generating meaningful input. This process generally indicated that the strategy as designed would be effective, and several stakeholders agreed to distribute information about the process to their constituent groups. (A list of stakeholders interviewed is included as Appendix A.)

Newsletters, Postcards and Door Hangers

Newsletters and postcards were sent to local residents and identified stakeholders in advance of the public workshops to generate awareness of the Comprehensive

Corridor Study Process. The newsletters described the process and key issues to be addressed at the upcoming workshops. In advance



background information, workshop announcements and summaries, as well as relevant media coverage of the process and draft documents as they became available.

Public Workshops

In the spring of 2008, two public workshops were held in Paso Robles. Following the workshops, the Study Team worked over the summer of 2008 to finalize improvement evaluation criteria. The improvement packages incorporated a variety of considerations including technical requirements and public sentiment. A final public workshop in March 2009 unveiled the findings of the Corridor Study to the public.

Outreach through Community Based Organizations

In addition to the established outreach methods described above, the project team coordinated with the Economic Opportunity Council, a local Community-Based Organization and a local educator to translate a variety of project materials into Spanish and outreach to

of the May 2008 workshop, Caltrans staff went door-to-door in the corridor to leave door hanger meeting reminders and encourage residents to attend the meeting.

Website

A project website, *www.46eastforthe future.org*, was launched in February 2008 to serve as an online project forum. The site was updated periodically throughout the project and featured relevant planning documents,

non-English speaking residents about the project. While these efforts did not turn out a significant number of Spanish speakers to the public events, the effort was worthwhile in that it provided opportunities to participate through inclusive outreach methods and techniques.

Speaking Engagements

Caltrans Project Manager Larry Newland spoke at the local Rotary Club and on radio programs to describe the overall process and encourage attendance at the public workshops.

Local Media Coverage

Caltrans staff secured media coverage throughout the process, five articles appeared in the Paso Robles Press, one article appeared in the San Luis Obispo Tribune and the March 5, 2008 workshop was covered by KSBY.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EVALUATION

Following the conclusion of the public involvement activities, a short survey was developed and

made available on the project website for those who attended the public workshop to generate feedback about the process.

Survey respondents were generally in agreement that workshop materials, exercises and the planning process website helped them understand the project better, that the meeting locations and timing were accessible and that Caltrans heard them and did a good job of including the public.





major findings

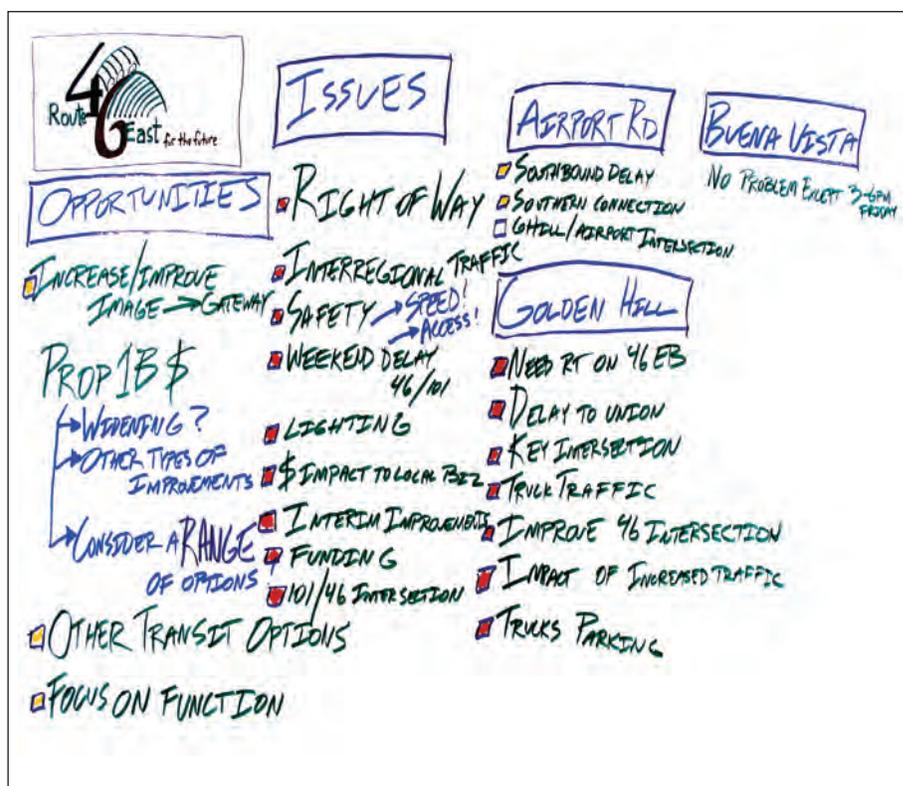
The Major Findings section is divided into three major categories:

- Workshop Findings
- Study Team Findings
- Comprehensive Corridor Study Findings

WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Informational Workshop: March 5, 2008

The goal of the March 5, 2008 workshop was to introduce the public to the CCS process and the desired objectives that the study was going to produce. The public was asked to participate in both large and small group discussions to determine the individual uses of the transportation system and the priorities for each public participant (i.e., what were the important community based interests and evaluation criteria?).



Above: March 5, 2008 Wallgraphic

Following the large group discussion focusing on general corridor use patterns and issues, participants continued the discussion in small groups where they answered three questions:



Goals and Evaluation Criteria

Goals

- Increasing safety and efficiency
- Fostering connectivity in all directions
- Enhancing community cohesion, character and quality of life
- Separating local, regional and interregional traffic
- Promoting multi-modal movement
- Providing a decent level of service
- Ensuring goods movement

Objective Evaluation Criteria

CRITERION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
• Safety	• Reducing Conflicts
• Congestion Relief & Connectivity	• Delay
• Feasibility	• Consistent with safe standards or proven methodology
• Fundability	• Obtainable (\$)/ Cost Effective
• Phaseability	• Stand Alone Utility
• Sustainability	• Time to Projected Deficiency & Cost to Maintain

- Level of service/traffic flow
- Aesthetics/gateway
- Maintaining the character of Paso Robles
- Where are there opportunities to improve the corridor? *Participants identified the US 101/Hwy 46 East interchange, Golden Hill and Airport Road intersections as the areas with greatest opportunity for safety and mobility improvements.*

As in the large group, stakeholders were very concerned about safety, and this issue was one of their highest priorities. The intersection with Airport Road was singled out as particularly dangerous.

Protecting Paso Robles' rural aesthetic and quality of life were very important goals for many participants, who expressed a desire that any design solution be in keeping with current community character. Many people believed that a six-lane highway was not appropriate for Paso Robles.

- Which of the corridor goals is most important to you, and why? *Overall, "increasing safety and efficiency" and "separating local, regional and interregional traffic" were given the highest priority by participants.*
- Where are your specific concerns in the corridor? *Participants identified the following top issues:*
 - Safety
 - Protecting business
 - Connectivity

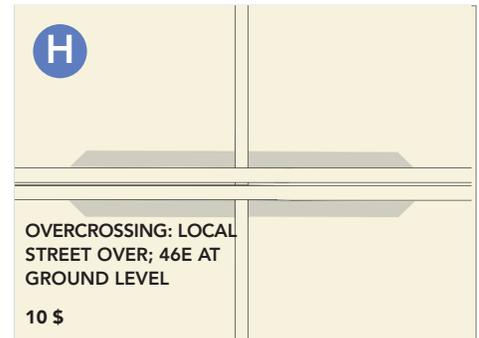
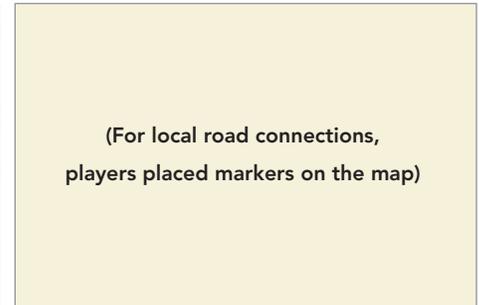
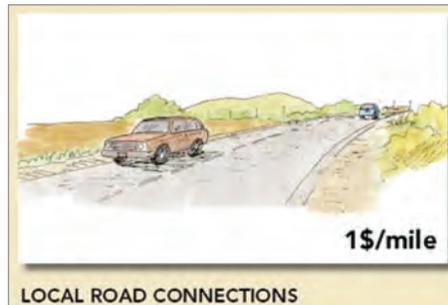
Open House and Interactive Workshop: May 29, 2008

The goal of the second workshop was to provide residents with an opportunity to express their preferences for potential corridor improvements and design strategies through an interactive exercise.

A one hour open house was followed by a program including a summary presentation of the previous workshop outcomes and an interactive scenario component that asked the public to participate in “designing” a 20-year plan for the corridor.

During this scenario, small groups gathered around large aerial maps and were oriented to key intersections and pending development projects in the corridor by a facilitator who then asked them to choose from various possible improvement options for the corridor, keeping their mobility interests in mind.

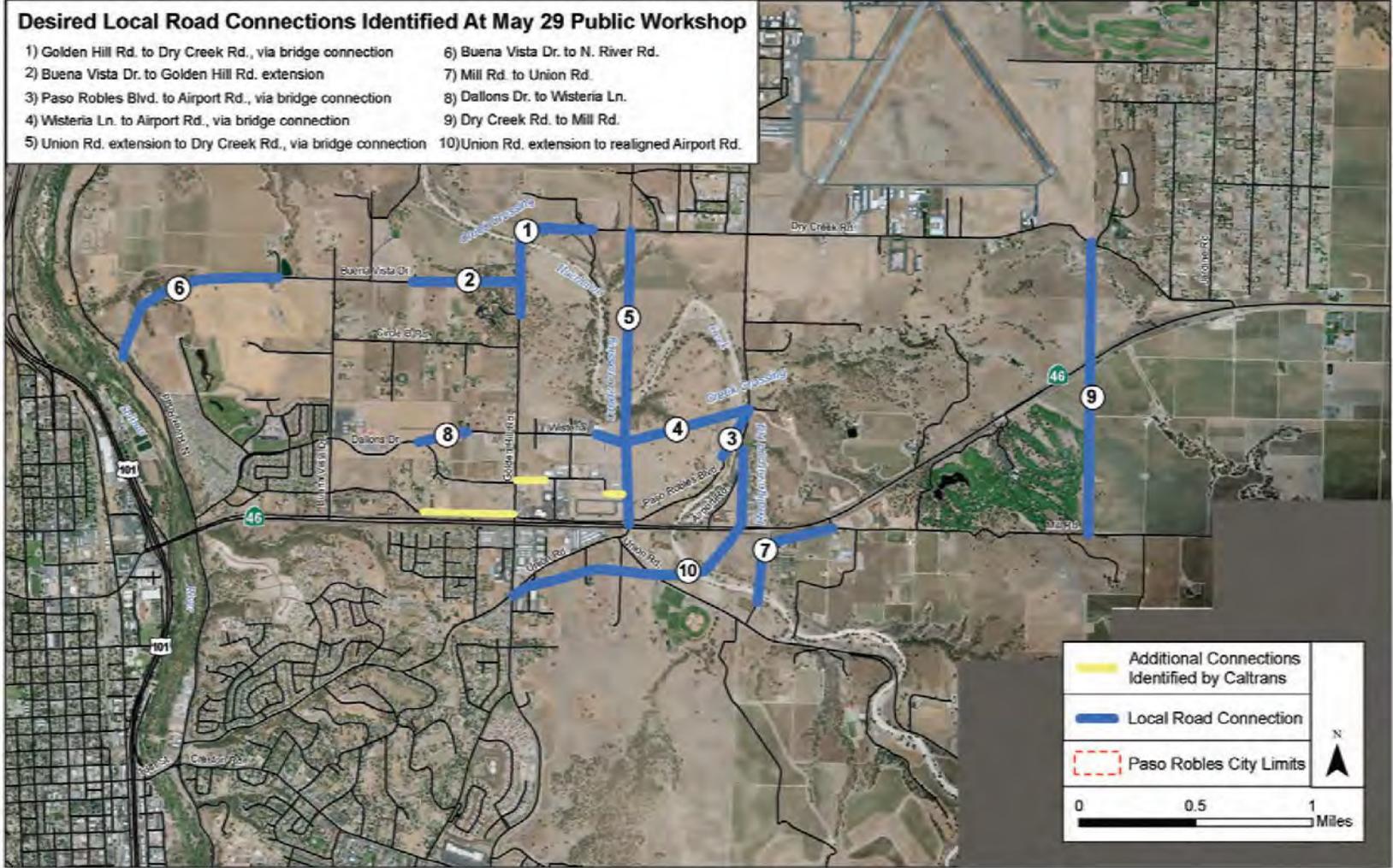
Improvements were depicted on a series of playing cards designed for the workshop. On one side of the



card was a perspective illustration of the improvement option and on the reverse was a scaled ‘bird’s-eye’ schematic drawing that, when played, fit onto the aerial map. Local road improvements were identified with pipe cleaners that participants

Desired Local Road Connections Identified At May 29 Public Workshop

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Golden Hill Rd. to Dry Creek Rd., via bridge connection | 6) Buena Vista Dr. to N. River Rd. |
| 2) Buena Vista Dr. to Golden Hill Rd. extension | 7) Mill Rd. to Union Rd. |
| 3) Paso Robles Blvd. to Airport Rd., via bridge connection | 8) Dallons Dr. to Wisteria Ln. |
| 4) Wisteria Ln. to Airport Rd., via bridge connection | 9) Dry Creek Rd. to Mill Rd. |
| 5) Union Rd. extension to Dry Creek Rd., via bridge connection | 10) Union Rd. extension to realigned Airport Rd. |



	Additional Connections Identified by Caltrans
	Local Road Connection
	Paso Robles City Limits
N 	
0 0.5 1 Miles	

placed on the aerial map to identify preferred locations for local road improvements.

The participants were asked to design an improvement scenario with various corridor constraints in mind such as design standards, funding, and potential impacts to local businesses.

Improvement options were assigned a non-monetary value reflecting the scale of magnitude of the project costs. The exercise was originally designed as a two-part exercise where participants would identify ideal long-term solutions without financial constraint and then be asked to refine their choices based on an identified budget. However, most groups were fiscally conservative from the outset of the exercise and did not greatly exceed the fictional corridor budget. Upon completion of the exercise, participants were asked to prioritize the improvements they had identified. These results are graphically depicted in Appendix B.

Based on the findings of the small group exercise, the following are high priorities for local residents:

- Developing additional local road connectivity and generally improving local road connections
- Maintaining existing businesses and protecting right-of-way
- Maintaining the character of the surrounding community
- Ensuring corridor safety by improving the Golden Hill and Jardine Road connections

Following the public workshop, these findings were used to define the Stakeholder Acceptance Criterion that was part of the improvement evaluation matrix described in the Evaluation and Recommendation section.

Final Open House: March 11, 2009

A final project open house was held on March 11, 2009 to present the draft Comprehensive Corridor Study document and key recommendations. The event was attended by approximately 40 people and provided an opportunity to reflect on the steps involved in developing the





CCS. Caltrans staff were available to answer questions in depth.

Overall Workshop Findings

- The majority of workshop attendees were interested in local circulation improvements.
- Workshop presentations, materials and activities successfully educated attendees about the complexities and challenges of transportation planning.

STUDY TEAM FINDINGS

- Agreeing on shared values and committing to the ongoing Study Team process was integral to reaching agreement as needed and developing a planning document that met the needs of the various agencies.
- Establishing the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was a successful approach to addressing technical issues on an as-needed basis. With these issues being discussed at the TAC level, Study Team meetings were more focused and strategic.

COMPREHENSIVE CORRIDOR STUDY FINDINGS

The key findings and recommendations of the CCS included calling for:

- Right of way preservation in the Union Road area
- Development of a local parallel route system
- Development of plan lines to be incorporated into local, regional and State planning documents
- Integration of the recommendations into the local, regional and State planning document to provide a level of consistency between all the agencies
- Development of funding strategies and initiation of Project Study Report (PSR).

For More Information

Readers interested in learning more about projects within the SR 46 East Comprehensive Corridor Study area or obtaining a copy of the full CCS should contact Caltrans District 5 directly.

appendices

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY	22
APPENDIX B: GROUP FINDINGS FROM MAY 29 WORKSHOP	24

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

As part of the public engagement design process, numerous stakeholder groups were identified for targeted outreach activities by the Study Team. From this general list, specific individuals were selected for interviews based on their ability to comment on the proposed public engagement process and provide additional ideas and resources.

During January 2008, Carolyn Verheyen of MIG conducted eight stakeholder interviews. Stakeholders represented citizen interests and other sectors such as local business, government and education. The interviewees are listed below.

Interviewees provided wide-ranging comments to the five prepared questions. The content and variety of opinions are described in the Key Findings section. Building rapport with the stakeholders and by extension, the groups they represent, was another key outcome of

the stakeholder interview process. The survey instrument is included as an appendix to this report.

The following stakeholders were interviewed:

Mary Chambers
Fix 46

Sandee McLaughlin
Cuesta College

Kelly Jenal-Stainbrook
Paso Robles School District

Stacie Jacob
Paso Robles Wine
Country Alliance

Mike Gibson
City of Paso Robles
Chamber of Commerce

Vivian Robertson
Mid-State Fair

Chris Iversen
SLOCOG Citizen
Advisory Committee

Greg McMillan
Shandon Area Committee;
also representing North
County Watch

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. A public involvement process is being designed and we need your input. Whose participation is critical and how do you recommend we get them involved? What other groups or individuals should we reach out to for inclusion in this process?
2. Based on past experience, what public engagement methods work well and what methods did not deliver as expected? (How do people provide input or engage in the process?)
3. How do the interest groups you represent receive information? What methods have people come to rely on?
4. What is your desired role in this process?
5. What other considerations should we keep in mind as we implement the public engagement process during 2008?

KEY FINDINGS

Participation

When asked who should be included in the 46 East for the Future process, interviewees identified many of the same stakeholders identified by the Study Team; confirming that the appropriate audience has been identified. Interviewees also emphasized the importance of transparency with the public about the potential physical impact of any project, as well as costs and time-frame. In addition, the long-range planning horizon for the effort was identified as a potential challenge for sustaining public interest and engagement.

Methods

When asked to identify successful public engagement methods that will work in the Paso Robles area, interviewees described methods that focus on personal contact, especially with public officials.

While some interviewees questioned the effectiveness of night meetings, others were supportive of them. Additional outreach activi-

ties such as the project website, newsletters and fact sheets were widely supported by the interviewees as effective tools. They also supported media outreach through local newspapers and radio.

Information sharing at existing events

Interviewees supported the proposed information distribution methods such as email and newsletters, while also offering to provide project information directly to their groups.

Desired role

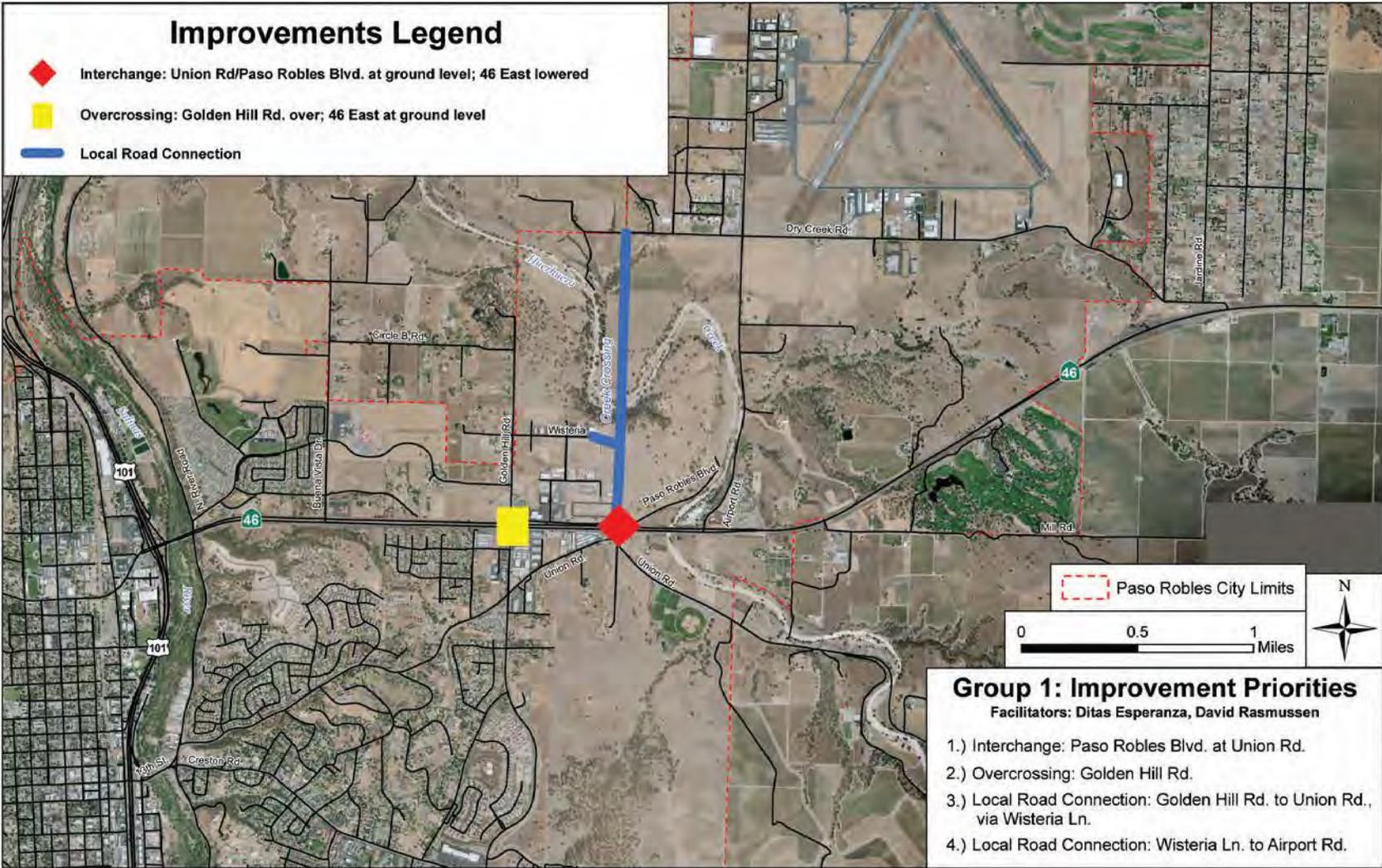
When asked about their desired role in the process, interviewees expressed interest in attending workshops and a sharing information. Interviewees agreed to share information about the process with their constituents and serve as liaisons between these groups and project staff.

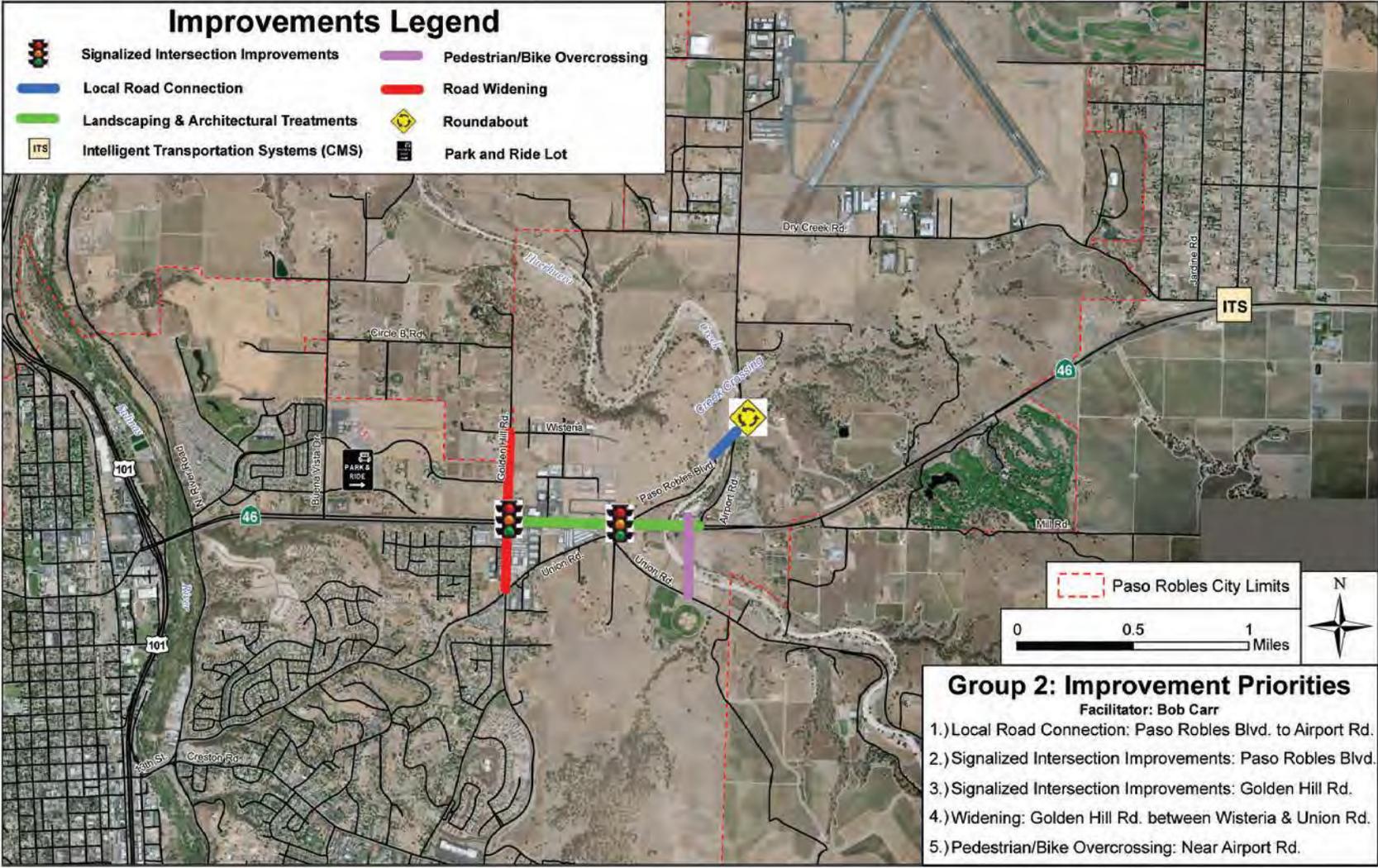
Coordination with current planning activities

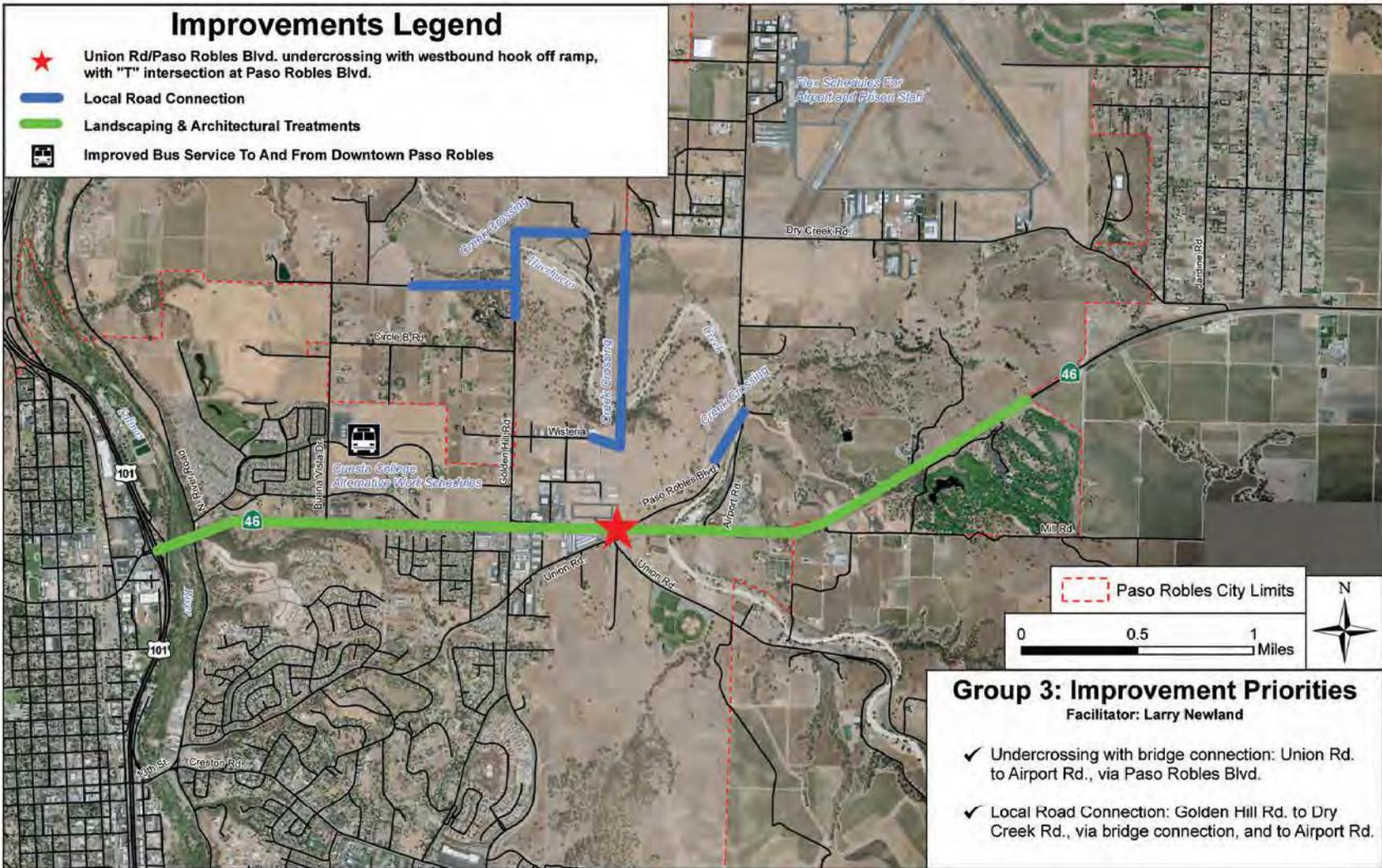
Interviewees expressed a strong desire to coordinate with existing planning activities in the corridor.

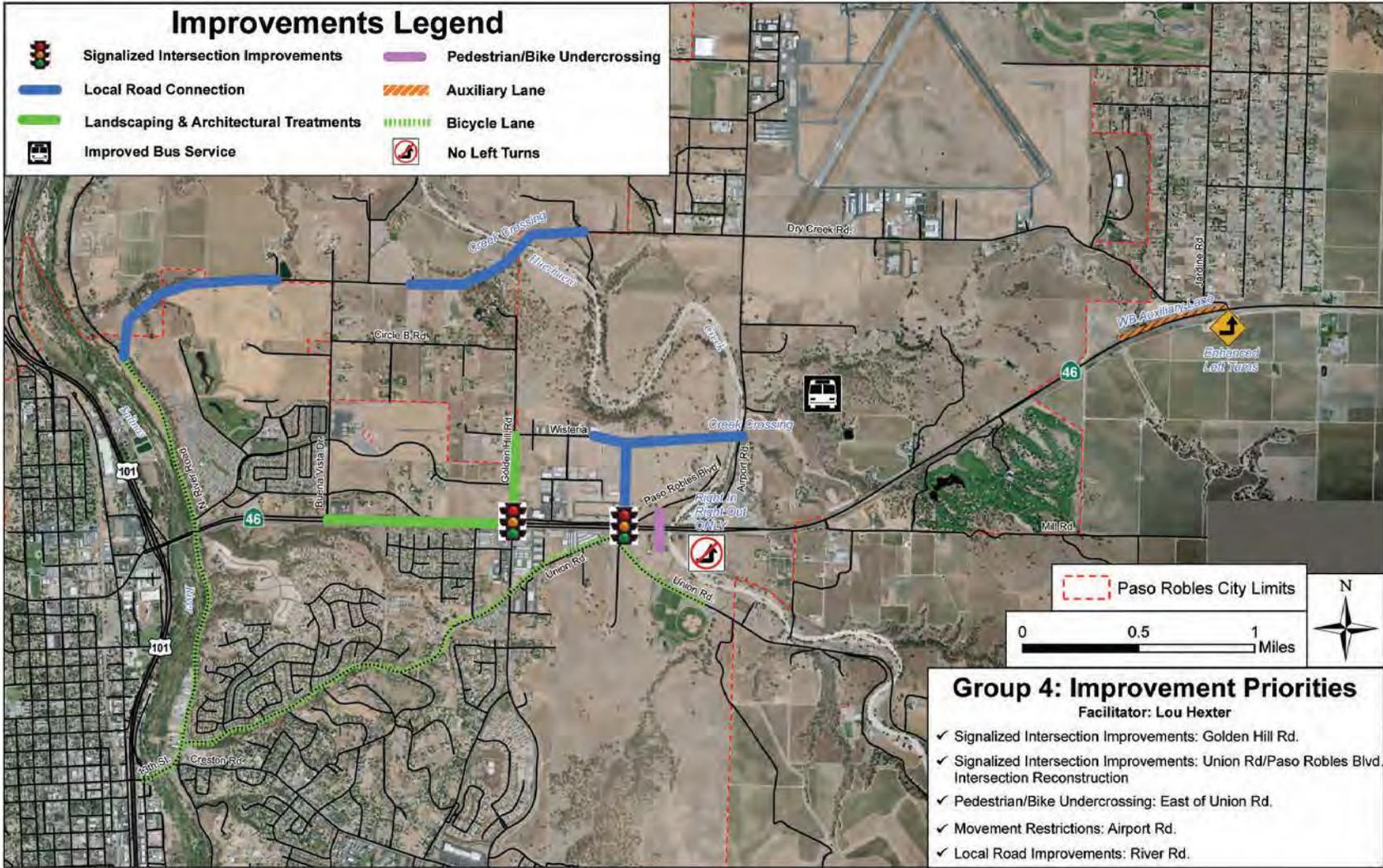
APPENDIX B: GROUP FINDINGS FROM MAY 29 WORKSHOP

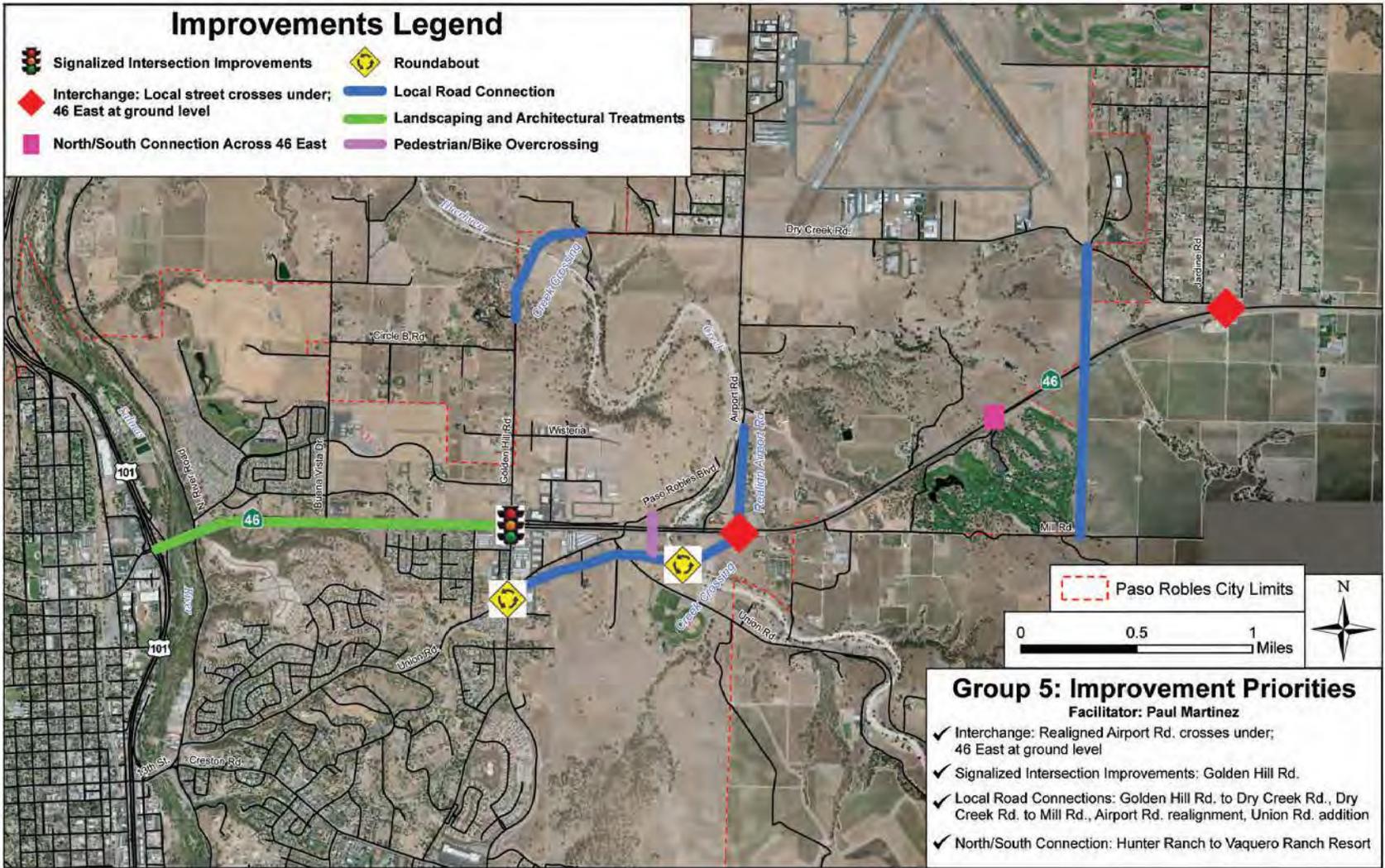
The following pages depict the results of the small group exercises including types and locations of improvements. These findings are included to represent the range of concepts discussed during the public involvement activities.

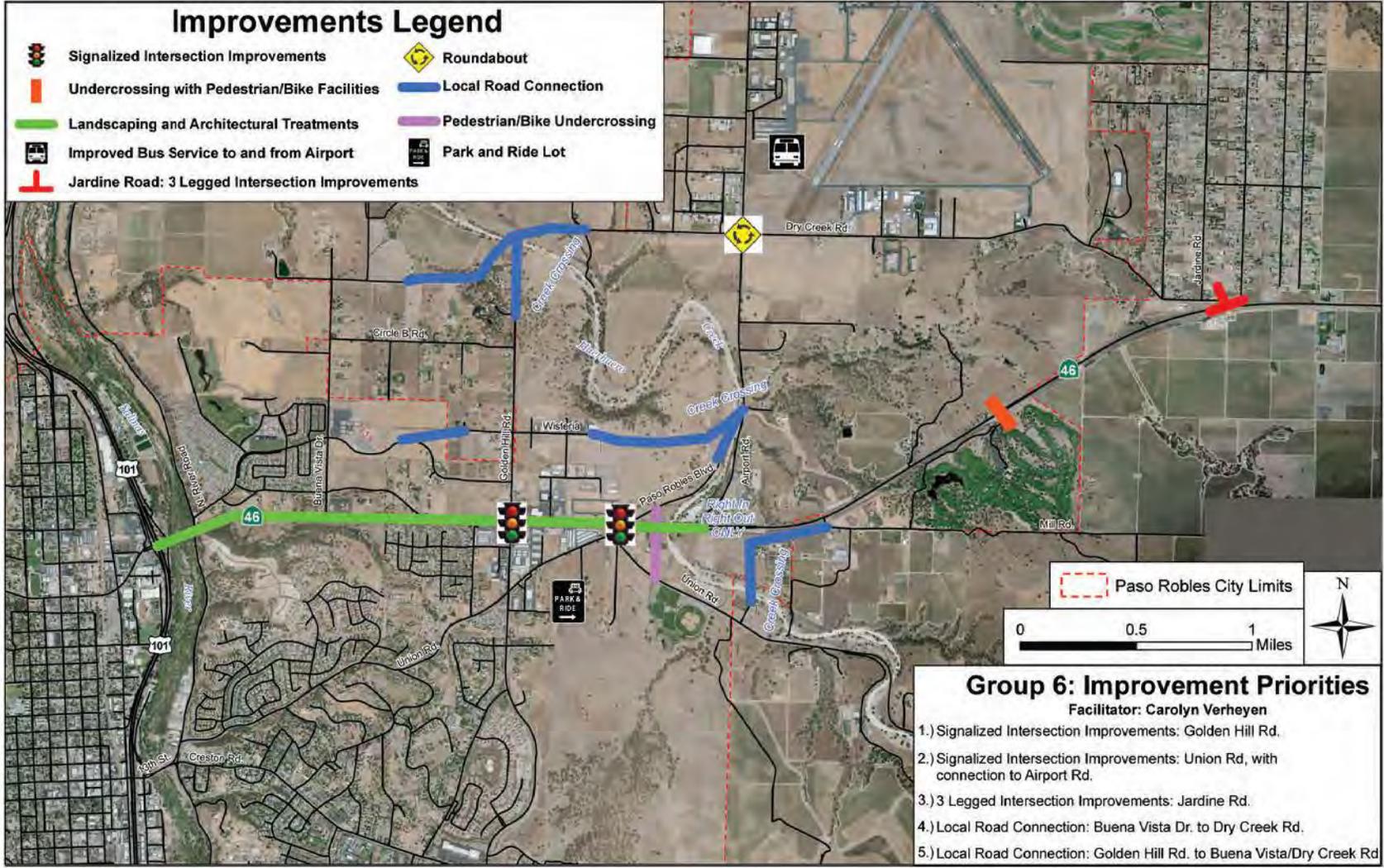












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