NOTICE OF PREPARATION
of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Santa Barbara Vic Trace Reservoir Replacement Project

Date: November 13, 2025

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Interested Parties

Project Title:

Vic Trace Reservoir Replacement Project, Project No. 41510

Project Location:

The Project site encompasses the Vic Trace Reservoir parcel and various water infrastructure improvements in the Alta Mesa neighborhood in the City of Santa Barbara (City), California.

The Vic Trace Reservoir parcel covers approximately 15 acres (14.726 acres) and is located on City-owned property at 740 Dolores Drive, Santa Barbara (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 035-033-031). The parcel contains existing drinking water infrastructure facilities, existing City communication facilities, and La Coronilla Park. Access to the Vic Trace Reservoir parcel is from La Coronilla Drive between residences at 1617 and 1633 La Coronilla Drive via an existing 20-foot-wide easement through the 1617 La Coronilla Drive property.

Underground water main pipeline (main) work is proposed within the public right-of-way (ROW) paved roadways near the Vic Trace Reservoir parcel, including La Coronilla Drive, Dolores Drive, Ricardo Avenue, La Vista Del Oceano, and Meigs Road.

Notice Of Preparation Comment Period:

November 13, 2025, to December 18, 2025

Scoping Meeting:

On **December 3, 2025, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.,** the Scoping Meeting will be held at the Louise Lowry Davis Center located at 111 W Victoria Street, Santa Barbara, California 93101.

Lead Agency Contact:

Kelly Bourque, Senior Project Engineer
City of Santa Barbara, Public Works Department, Engineering Division
630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93102
Email: VicTrace@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Introduction:

The City is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). After preparing an Initial Study, the City has determined that the Project may have a potential significant effect on Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Noise, Transportation, and Utilities and Service Systems. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to evaluate these potential effects.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) from the City informs agencies and interested parties that an EIR will be prepared for the proposed Project. This NOP solicits guidance from regulatory agencies about the scope and content of the environmental information included in the EIR as related to the agencies' statutory responsibilities. The agencies will use the EIR when considering their respective permits or other approvals related to the Project. This NOP allows interested parties to inform the City regarding environmental issues that should be addressed in the EIR.

Project Description:

Originally constructed in 1956, Vic Trace Reservoir is one of the City's largest water storage reservoirs. It serves as a vital component of the City's water distribution system, serving nearly 60,000 people or approximately 70% of the City's population. In 2021, the City's Water Distribution Infrastructure Plan (WDIP) recommended replacement of Vic Trace Reservoir due to its age, increasing repair needs, and importance to the City's overall water storage portfolio.

The proposed Project includes the following main elements:

- **Vic Trace Reservoir Parcel Improvements:** Replacement of the existing 10 million gallon (MG) Vic Trace Reservoir with two 5 MG reservoirs at the same site, building and facilities replacements, earthwork, and site improvements on the parcel, including possible renewable energy generation and storage.
- Offsite Improvements:
    - **Underground Water Mains:** Replacements, repairs, abandonments, and relocations of aging water mains in neighborhood areas near the Vic Trace Reservoir parcel.
    - **Underground Pressure Regulating Valve (PRV) Station Relocation**: Relocation of the reservoir's downstream PRV station to an improved location with safer entry.

Construction of the proposed Project is expected to occur over approximately three years, anticipated to begin in July 2028 and end in August 2031.

The objectives of the proposed Project include the following:

- Replace and upgrade aging water infrastructure to ensure safe and reliable drinking water;

- Improve existing facilities and install new facilities to enhance the operational reliability and resiliency, minimize the risk of future facility failures, and optimize hydraulics and operations of Vic Trace Reservoir and the City's water system;
- Maintain critical demand capacity (e.g., peak demands, structure fires, human consumption) and system pressure city-wide;
- Address updated regulations that require more robust security for water infrastructure; and
- Maintain the City's ability to store a large amount of water locally, which is a key element of Santa Barbara's strategy to remain resilient and resistant to local emergencies or other climate change-related issues (e.g., drought, storms, wildfires).

The CEQA Initial Study for the Project is available for review on the City's website: https://santabarbaraca.gov/VicTrace

Probable Environmental Effects and Scope of the EIR:

In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15063(a), the City prepared the CEQA Initial Study**,** which found potentially significant impact(s) in several environmental issue areas. The City advises that an EIR would be necessary to evaluate the potentially significant environmental effects on the following environmental topics outlined in Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines*:

- Aesthetics;
- Air Quality;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources;
- Geology and Soils;
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials;
- Noise;
- Transportation; and
- Utilities and Service Systems.

NOP Comment Period:

In accordance with the time limits identified in State law (CEQA Guidelines 15082(b)), please respond to this NOP with your comments on the scope and content of the EIR as soon as possible, but **no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 18**, which is 35 days following the date this NOP was first posted and published. Please include the name of the contact person for your agency, if applicable, and submit written comments to:

Kelly Bourque, Senior Project Engineer
City of Santa Barbara, Public Works Department, Engineering Division
630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93102
Email: VicTrace@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Americans With Disabilities Act:

If you need services or staff assistance to attend or participate in this meeting, contact the City Administrator's Office at (805) 564-5305. If possible, notification at least 48 hours before the meeting will usually enable the City to make reasonable arrangements. Specialized services, such as sign language interpretation or documents in Braille, may require additional lead time to arrange.

Figure 1 Regional Location

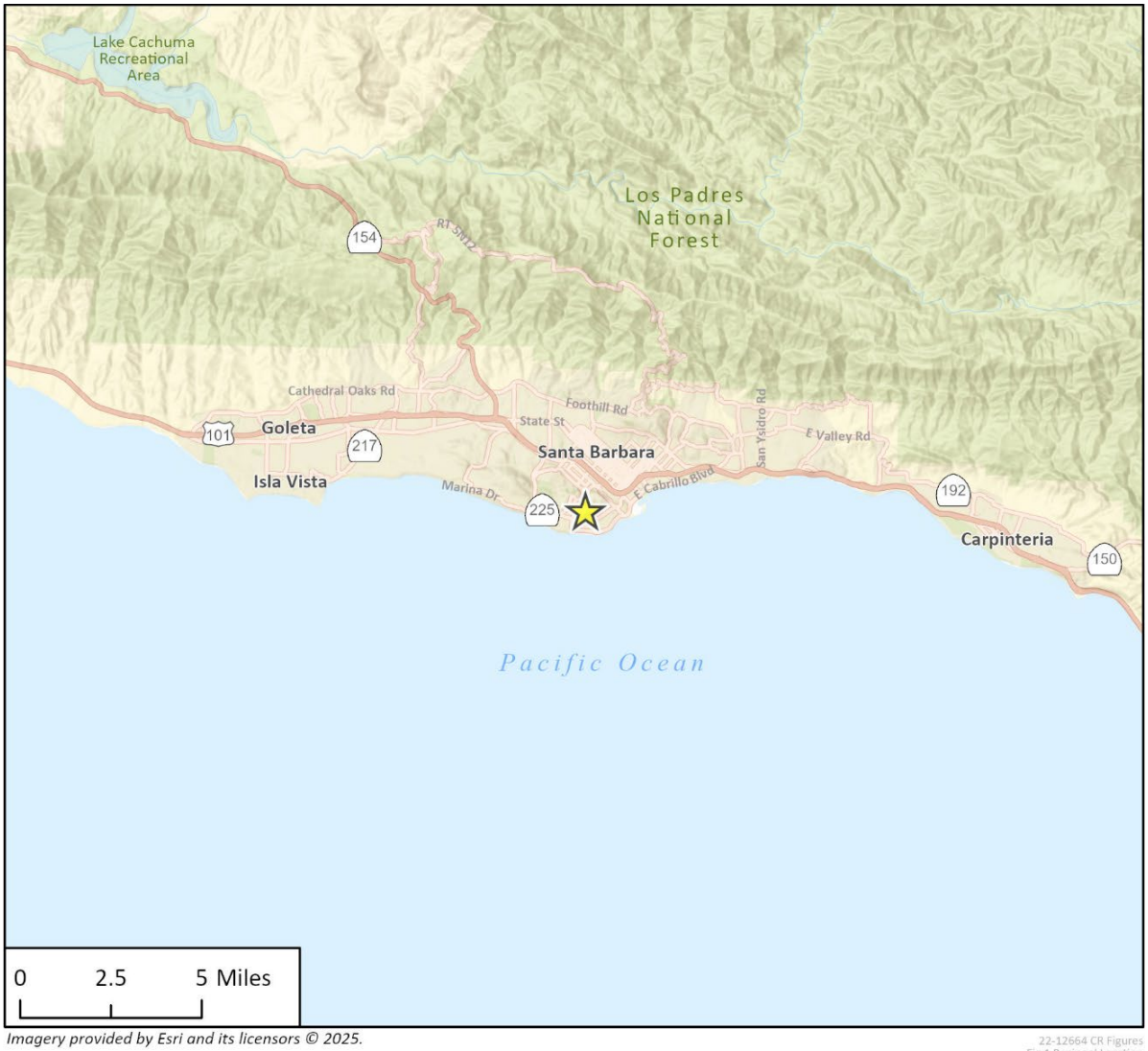

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Fig 1 Regional Location

Project Location

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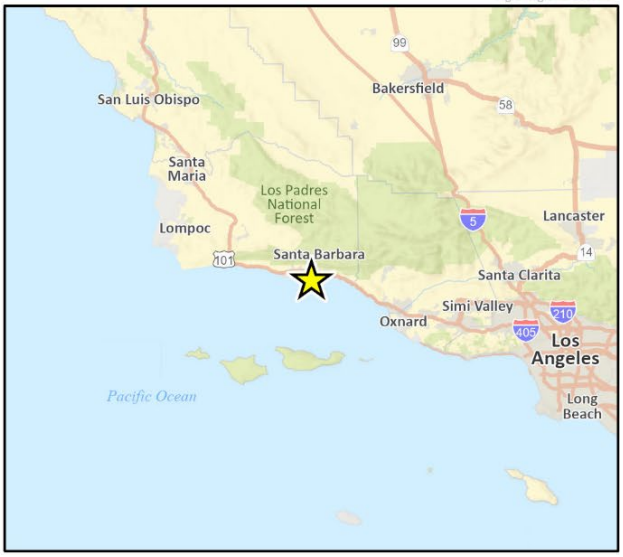

Figure 2 Project Site Location

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Fig 2 Project Location

Figure 3 Topographic Map

Basemap provided by National Geographic Society, Esri, and their licensors © 2025. Santa Barbara Quadrangle. T04N R27W S21,28.
The topographic representation depicted in this map may not portray all of the features currently found in the vicinity today and/or features depicted in this map may have changed since the original topographic map was assembled.

22-12664 CR Figures
Fig X Project Site Topo