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Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: 2019090448

Project Title: Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project

Lead Agency: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 5

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Project Location: Monterey County, City of Monterey, and City of Del Rey Oaks

City *County*

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

The project would make intersection operational improvements and wildlife connectivity improvements along State Route 68 in Monterey County from post mile 4.8, west of the Josselyn Canyon Road intersection, to post mile 13.7, east of the San Benancio Road intersection. Nine intersections within this 8.9-mile stretch of State Route 68 are proposed for improvements, and include Josselyn Canyon Road, Olmsted Road, State Route 218, Ragsdale Drive, York Road, Pasadera Drive, Laureles Grade Road, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road.
The purpose of the project is to reduce travel delays, vehicle collisions, and collisions between wildlife and vehicles, as well as to improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians within the highway corridor. Under consideration are two project build alternatives that would either convert the nine existing signalized intersections into one- or two-lane roundabouts (Build Alternative 1) or modify the intersections with additional lane configurations and upgrades to signal systems and equipment (Build Alternative 2). Both build alternatives would also include a wildlife connectivity improvement component that would install new underground culverts at five locations along State Route 68 to facilitate large mammal crossings.

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

Relocations/Real Property: both Build Alternatives would require partial property acquisition areas and temporary construction easements over multiple land parcels; Alternative 2 would require more acquisition areas than Alternative 1 adjacent to the nine intersections. Mitigation prescribes acquisition activities if necessary be conducted in accordance with the Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and Caltrans' Relocation Assistance Program. Aesthetics/Visual Impacts: Both Build Alternatives would increase the urban character of the project area and would reduce the visual quality of the designated Scenic Highway corridor. Alternative 2 would have a larger footprint and additional cumulative retaining wall mass. Multiple mitigation, avoidance, and minimization measures prescribe design and other elements to reduce the visual effects of the intersection changes, however, the visual change would remain significant and unavoidable under CEQA. Cultural Resources: both build alternatives have the potential to affect currently untested portions of buried archaeological sites previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as well as another area with elevated sensitivity. Mitigation measures prescribe completion of site testing and determination of a Finding of Effects through implementation of steps included in a Programmatic Agreement and Cultural Resources Management Plan. Floodway impacts: Alternative 2 would require placement of additional highway bridge piers in El Toro Creek. Mitigation (Alternative 2) includes Caltrans final design review to maintain existing base flood elevation. Biological Resources: both Build Alternatives would result in temporary and permanent impacts to natural communities, wetlands and other jurisdictional waters, sensitive plant and animal species. Multiple measures.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Known areas of controversy include:
Impacts to adjacent properties for partial acquisition areas for additional highway right of way needs, and the potential for one relocation of a church facility at the Josselyn Canyon Road intersection with SR 68;
Impacts to wetlands and other jurisdictional waters and sensitive species habitats; removal of a large number of trees for both build alternatives.
Aesthetic/visual impacts from either build alternative design changes to the intersections given the designated Scenic Highway corridor;
Concerns regarding the two types of build alternative designs and opinions on their relative effectiveness for delay reduction goals, access to State Route 68 from side streets and driveways, travel time and congestion management, emergency vehicle access through roundabouts and other design-specific concerns; preference by some members of the public for a bypass route alignment at the eastern end of the project limits;
Construction period impacts on traffic.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 4
Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 3 Central Coast
State Water Resources Control Board
California Office of Historic Preservation
California Transportation Commission