

# Road Safety Enhancement Project

UNINCORPORATED VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
DISTRICT 7-VEN-33 (PM 18.88-19.04)  
33230/0716000257

## DRAFT INITIAL STUDY WITH PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Prepared by the  
State of California, Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016 and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.



October 2020

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Reduce collision severity on the State Route 33 by widening roadway, upgrading existing rock barrier, installing concrete drainage, and placing high friction pavement at post-mile 18.88 to 19.04 in unincorporated Ventura County

## INITIAL STUDY WITH PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code  
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

Oct 12, 2020  
Date of Approval

  
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## Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

### *Project Description*

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to enhance the safety on State Route 33 from post-mile (PM) 18.88 to PM 19.04 in Ventura County by widening the roadway, installing a stamped concrete barrier, incorporating a concrete-lined drainage, and applying a high friction surface treatment to reduce accidents and the severity of collisions.

### *Determination*

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans' intent to adopt an MND for this project. This does not mean that Caltrans' decision regarding the project is final. This MND is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

The Department has prepared an Initial Study for this project, and pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project would have no effect on agricultural and forest resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, recreation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities.

In addition, the proposed project would have less than significant effects to aesthetics, air quality, energy, geology and soils, noise, transportation, public services, and wildfire.

With the following mitigation measure incorporated, the proposed project would have less than significant effects to biological resources:

**BIO-20:** Caltrans will mitigate the loss of riparian habitat by replanting species on-site on the hillside after construction and in the biological study area outside of the project impact area within Nork Forth Matilija Creek.

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RONALD KOSINSKI  
Deputy District Director  
Division of Environmental Planning, District 7  
California Department of Transportation

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Date

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# Chapter 1 – Proposed Project

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## 1.1 Introduction

### NEPA Assignment

California participated in the “Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program” (Pilot Program) pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 327, for more than five years, beginning July 1, 2007, and ending September 30, 2012. MAP-21 (P.L. 112-141), signed by President Obama on July 6, 2012, amended 23 USC 327 to establish a permanent Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. As a result, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to 23 USC 327 (NEPA Assignment MOU) with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The NEPA Assignment MOU became effective October 1, 2012, and was renewed on December 23, 2016, for a term of five years. In summary, Caltrans continues to assume FHWA responsibilities under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal environmental laws in the same manner as was assigned under the Pilot Program, with minor changes. With NEPA Assignment, FHWA assigned and Caltrans assumed all of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA. This assignment includes projects on the State Highway System and Local Assistance Projects off of the State Highway System within the State of California, except for certain categorical exclusions that FHWA assigned to Caltrans under the 23 USC 326 CE Assignment MOU, projects excluded by definition, and specific project exclusions.

Caltrans, as assigned by the FHWA, is the lead agency under the NEPA and under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The USACE is a cooperating agency under NEPA, as they will be the permitting agency for the Waters of the U.S. during final design of the project. USACE is not contributing funds for construction of the project.

### Existing Facilities

SR 33 originates at United States (US 101) in the City of San Buenaventura and extends north to the Santa Barbara County line and beyond. The SR 33 corridor is mostly semi-rural with land use varying from open space forest lands, industrial, residential, to agricultural lands. The route serves both recreational and interregional purposes, providing access to the Los Padres National Forest and to the Lake Casitas Recreation Area, by way of SR 150, and linking the City of San Buenaventura (more commonly known as Ventura) with the City of Ojai. The route also passes through the Ventura oil fields and the unincorporated areas of Casitas Springs and Oak View. The portion of the route that extends from the Ojai Valley through Los Padres National Forest and ends in the City of Maricopa in Kern County is called the Maricopa Highway.

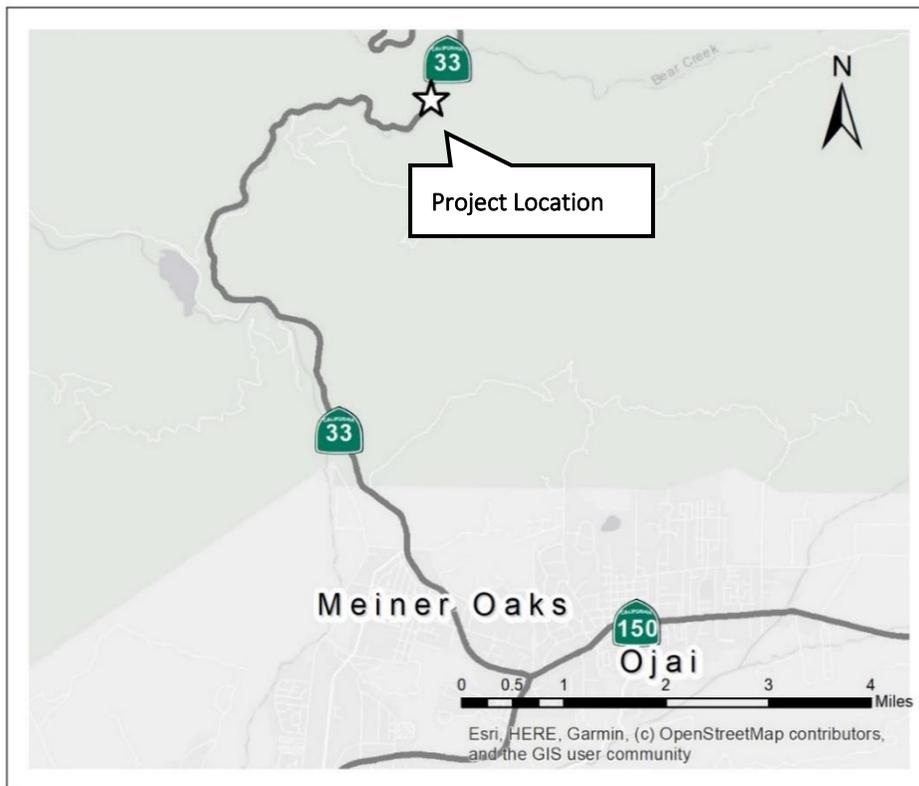
The SR 33 project site is a two-lane highway located within the mountainous terrain of the Los Padres National Forest at an elevation of approximately 1,760 feet above mean sea level, defined by the micaceous clay shale rock as the primary geological formation. At the project site, the roadway is a curved 22-foot wide roadbed with shoulder widths that vary from 0 to 2 feet.

Each lane is approximately 10 feet and six inches in length. The setting of the project is within a gorge and includes a protruding rock surface known as a vertical seep that trickles down natural springwater. The natural springwater splashes onto the roadbed and flows across the road into North Fork Matilija Creek. It also flows down the side of the northbound lane down to the bridge approximately 240 square feet away from the protruding rock. The protruding rock is a local landmark that communities in the area identify closely with. Communities in the immediate south of the vicinity include Ojala, Meiner Oaks, and Ojai, and are located approximately 3.5, 6.5, and 8.5 miles away, respectively.

Caltrans proposes the Road Safety Enhancement Project to enhance roadway safety and reduce collisions to rock barriers on SR 33 in Ventura County from post-mile (PM) 18.88 to PM 19.04 (Figure 1).

The project is included in the 2019 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and is proposed for funding from the SHOPP program (State Highway Operation and Protection Program). The project was approved on December 17, 2018 through Amendment #19-01 in the FTIP and the project Federal ID is VENLS01. The estimated project cost is expected to be approximately \$8.5 million.

**Figure 1. Project Location**



## 1.2 Purpose and Need

### Purpose

The purpose of this project is to:

- enhance roadway safety and
- reduce the severity of collisions and collisions to the rock barrier.

### Need

Due to the narrow widths of the roadway, vehicles have hit the rock barrier repeatedly over the last ten years and have hit the rock blocks off the road into the creek while making sharp turns at this site. The current roadway is a curved 22-foot wide roadbed with shoulder widths that vary from 0 to 2 feet (ft.). There is a 4.5 ft. x 1.5 ft. x 1.5 ft. block barrier left on the southbound shoulder to provide the intended protection of a collision barrier.

In addition, natural springwater splashes down the road from the protruding rock surface and has induced wet pavement in the area.

Based on the Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) and Selective Accident Retrieval Report (TSAR) for a 10-year period from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2019 (Table 1), the accident rate at the project location (PM 18.8/19.20) was 11.58 accidents per million vehicle miles (acc/mvm). The State average rate is 2.22 acc/mvm at similar state facilities. During these 10 years, the actual accident rates in 6 years (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2017) were much higher than the State average rates in the same year. There were no recorded accidents in the other 4 years (2014, 2015, 2017, and 2018). It should be noted that the SR 33 was closed in 2017 and 2018 for safety reasons after the Thomas fire.

**Table 1. Accident Rates Summary 2019**

Route	County	PM	Dates	ADT (*1000)	Accident Rates Per Million Vehicle Miles (acc/mvm)					
								California State Average		
					Fatal	Fatal+ Injury	Total	Fatal	Fatal+ Injury	Total
<b>33</b>					0.000	7.37	11.58	0.058	1.10	2.22
<b>33</b>	Ven	18.80- 19.20	1/1/2010 to 12/31/2010	0.8	0.000	8.33	8.33	0.055	1.04	2.10
<b>33</b>	Ven	18.80- 19.20	1/1/2012 to 12/31/2012	0.6	0.000	22.22	22.22	0.059	1.13	2.27
<b>33</b>	Ven	18.80- 19.20	1/1/2014 to 12/31/2014	0.6	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.059	1.08	2.17
<b>33</b>	Ven	18.80- 19.20	1/1/2016 to 12/31/2016	0.7	0.000	10.00	30.00	0.056	1.08	2.17
<b>33</b>	Ven	18.80- 19.20	1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018	0.6	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.059	1.13	2.27
<b>33</b>										2.27

*Note Fatal rates refers to accidents that resulted in a fatality, while fatal+injury includes numbers from accidents that resulted in fatalities and those that resulted in injuries.*

**Northbound**

All accidents within the project area occurred during the day (8AM to 4PM) in northbound direction. Based on the findings in the TSAR, the primary reason for collisions that occurred at this location in the northbound lane were related to speeding (66.7%) and other violations (33.3%). The types of collisions were hitting object (66.7%) and side-swiping (33.3%). All accidents occurred under the clear weather and dry road surface conditions.

**Southbound**

Seventy-five percent of the accidents occurred during the day (11AM to 6PM), and 25 percent of the accidents occurred during the night (9PM to 1AM) in the southbound direction. Based on the findings in the TSAR, the primary reason for collisions that occurred at this location in the southbound lane were related to improper turning (37.5%), influence of alcohol (25%), speeding

(12.5%), failure to yield (12.5%), and other violations (12.5%). The types of collisions were hitting object (50%), overturning (25%), broadsiding (12.5%), and side-swiping (12.5%). The majority accidents occurred under the clear weather (75%), and dry road surface (87.5%) conditions. Other accidents occurred under cloudy weather (25%) and wet road surface (12.5%) conditions. Table 2 summarizes the existing traffic collision data for the project location.

**Table 2. Primary Collision Factors**

1/1/2010 TO 12/31/2019 (PM 18.8/19.2)		SOUTHBOUND	NORTHBOUND
<b>TYPE OF COLLISIONS</b>	Head-On (%)		
	Sideswipe (%)	12.5	33.3
	Rear End (%)		
	Broadside (%)	12.5	
	Hit Object (%)	50.0	66.7
	Overturn (%)	25.0	
<b>PRIMARY COLLISION FACTOR</b>	Influence Alcohol (%)	25.0	
	Follow too Close (%)		
	Failure to Yield (%)	12.5	
	Improper Turn (%)	37.5	
	Speeding (%)	12.5	66.7
	Others/Unknown (%)	12.5	33.3
<b>WEATHER</b>	Clear (%)	75.0	100.0
	Cloudy (%)	25.0	
	Raining (%)		
<b>ROAD SURFACE</b>	Dry (%)	87.5	100.0
	Wet (%)	12.5	

### 1.3 Independent Utility and Logical Termini

Logical termini for project development are defined as (1) rational endpoints for a transportation improvement, and (2) rational end points for a review of environmental impact. The environmental impact end points frequently cover a broader geographic area than the strict limits of a proposed transportation improvement. Independent utility means that the project improvements have independent significance, or that the improvements are usable at a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements are made in the area.

The proposed project termini is logical because the project limits (PM 18.88 to PM 19.04) has been identified where most collisions occur due to the narrow curvature on SR 33.

The proposed project has independent utility because it does not rely on other projects to address the identified need. Improvements made on this project is anticipated to reduce the number and severity of the collisions that occur at this specific location.

## 1.4 Project Description

This section describes the proposed action and the project alternatives that were developed to meet the identified purpose and need of the project, while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. Three alternatives were analyzed for the project—the No-Build Alternative, Build Alternative 1, and Build Alternative 2.

The project is located on SR 33 in Ventura County from PM 18.88 to PM 19.04. The total length of the project is less than a quarter of a mile. The project is situated within the mountainous terrain of the Los Padres National Forest, and is next to North Fork Matilija Creek and a protruding rock surface known as a vertical seep. The purpose of this project is to enhance road safety and reduce collision severity.

## 1.5 Project Alternatives

**Build Alternative 1** – Build Alternative 1 (Figure 2) proposes to widen the roadway by four feet nine inches on the southbound direction of the SR 33 from PM 18.88 to PM 19.04 in Ventura County through a continuous cantilever slab (approximately 380 feet linear feet in length). On the northern end of the project, the height of the retaining rock block wall will be reduced to build the cantilever slab. The existing metal beam guardrail will also be removed to accommodate an overhang. The overhang is expected to extend less than three feet out of the roadway. This will result in an additional six inches of lane width for each lane (northbound and southbound) as well as a two-foot shoulder to widen the turning radius.

The existing rock block barrier (currently a 4.5 ft. x 1.5 ft. x 1.5 ft. barrier) will be replaced by a new cast-in-place textured stamped concrete barrier that is 36 inches in height and approximately 380 linear feet in length. The concrete barrier will be designed to match the existing landscape as a component of context sensitive solutions (Figure 4). An 18-inch high tubular handrailing will be incorporated on top of the concrete barrier.

The project will also include the construction of a two-foot wide and six-inch deep shallow concrete-lined drainage ditch along the northbound shoulder to funnel springwater runoff into North Fork Matilija Creek. The springwater will be rerouted to flow down the side of the bridge (approximately 240 sq. ft. away) and also through the cross-culvert (Figure 5) where it will be connected to North Fork Matilija Creek.

A high friction surface treatment (HFST) will be applied to a perennially wet section of the travelled roadway caused by the splashing of natural springwater onto the roadway. All the proposed improvements will be constructed within Caltrans right of way, but in United States Forest Service's jurisdiction.

Advanced curve warning signs will also be updated to warn travelers ahead of the curve as a part of the project.

The proposed project will implement a number of standardized project measures and mitigation measures designed to reduce air quality impacts, noise impacts, and water quality impacts. Measures include but are not limited to: 1) implementation of fugitive dust control measures in accordance with Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, 2) implementation of standard noise control measures in compliance with local and county regulations, and 3) standard best management practices in compliance with water quality permits.

**Build Alternative 2** – Build Alternative 2 (Figure 3) is identical to Build Alternative 1, except that the roadway will be widened by two feet nine inches instead of four feet nine inches as proposed by Build Alternative 1. An overhang measuring less than one foot is expected to be extended out of the roadway instead of an overhang measuring less than three feet.

All project design features and mitigation measures designed to minimize environmental impacts for Build Alternative 1 will also be implemented for Build Alternative 2.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 depicts the preliminary design plans for Build Alternatives 1 and 2 of the project. Figure 4 shows the concept plans for the proposed cast-in-place textured and stamped concrete barrier. Photographs of project location site are depicted in Figure 5 to Figure 10.

Figure 2. Preliminary Design Plans for Build Alternative 1

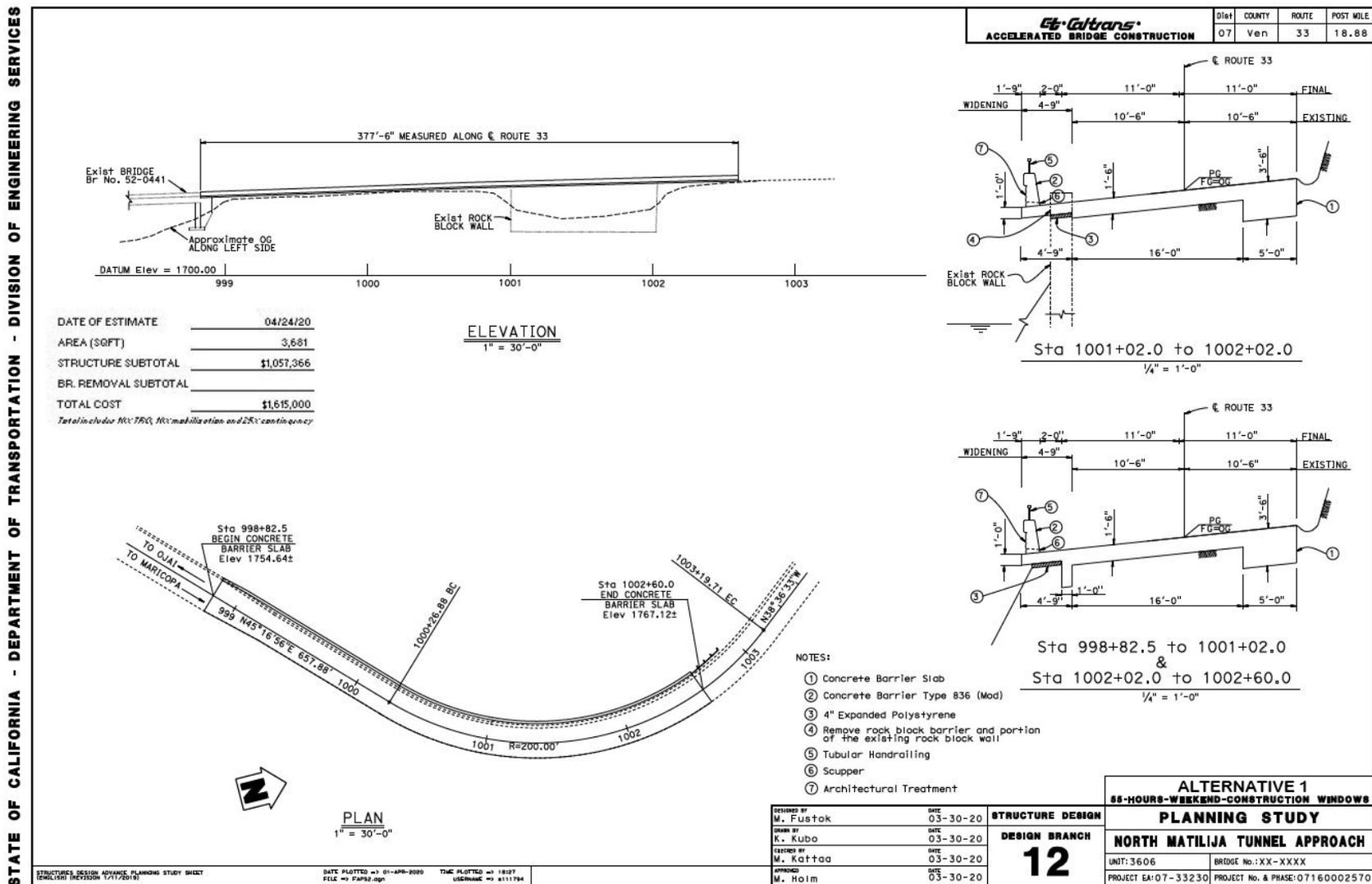


Figure 3. Preliminary Design Plans for Build Alternative 2

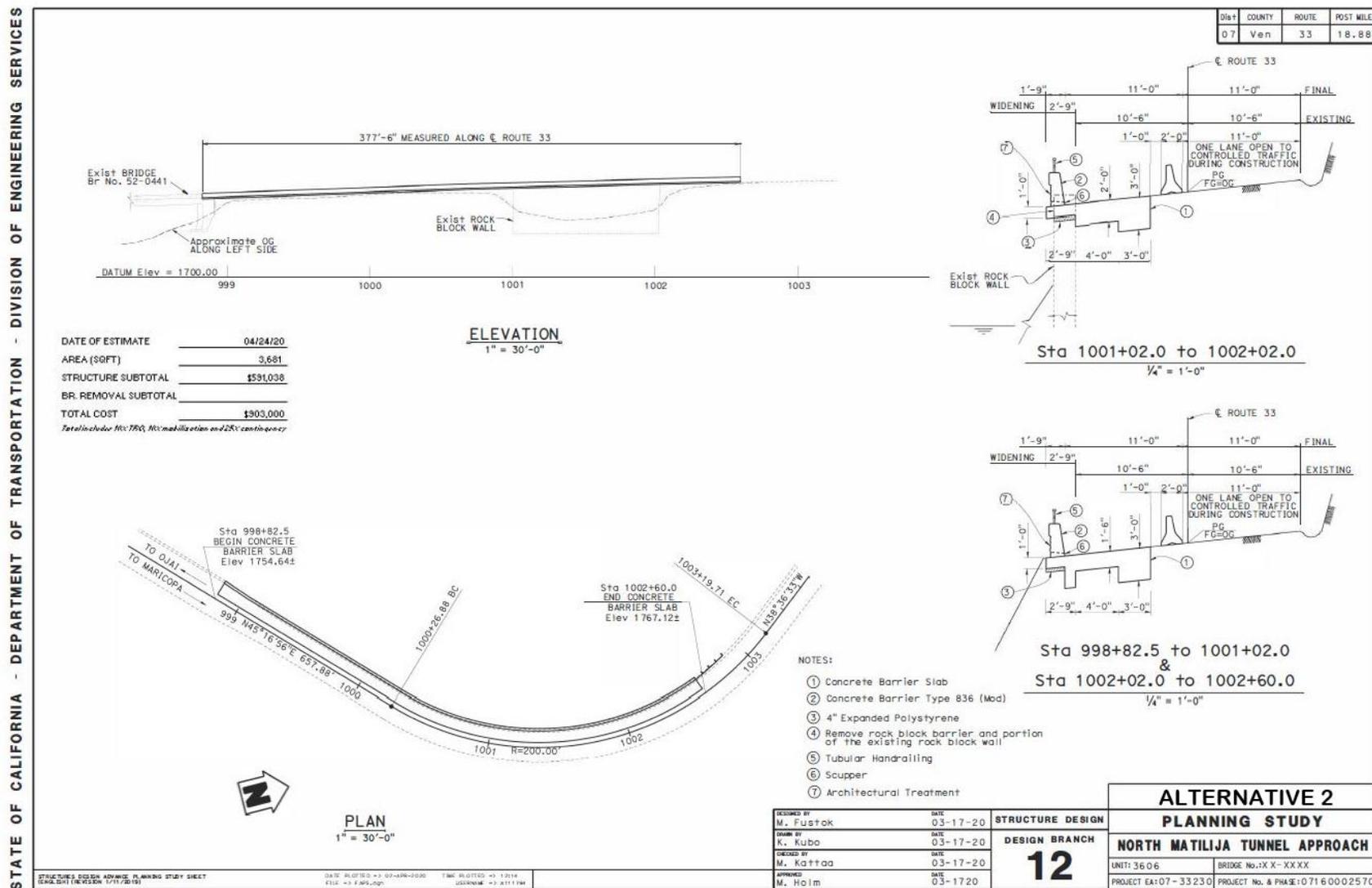


Figure 4. Concrete Barrier Aesthetic Treatment

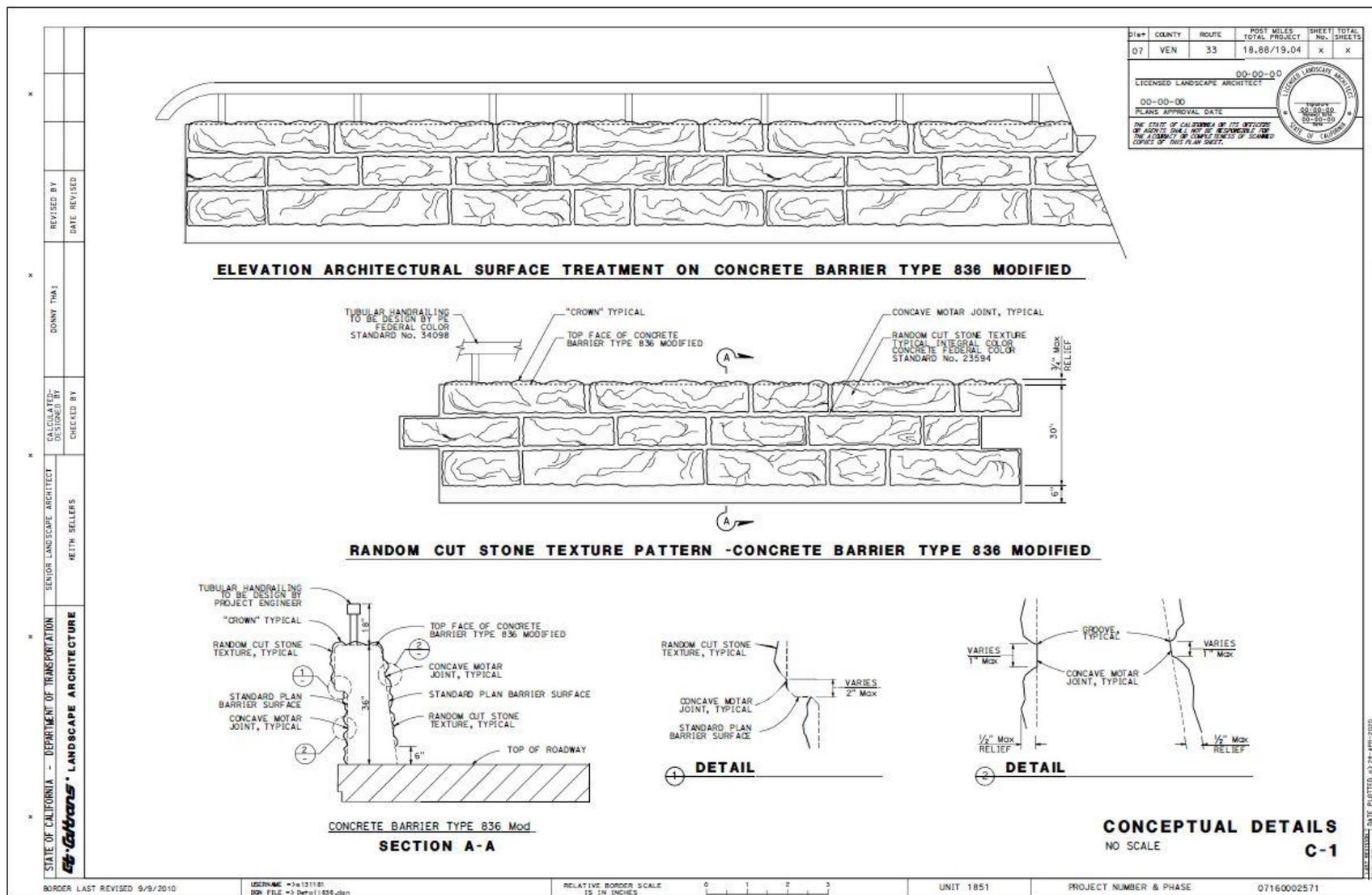


Figure 5. Aerial View of Project Site

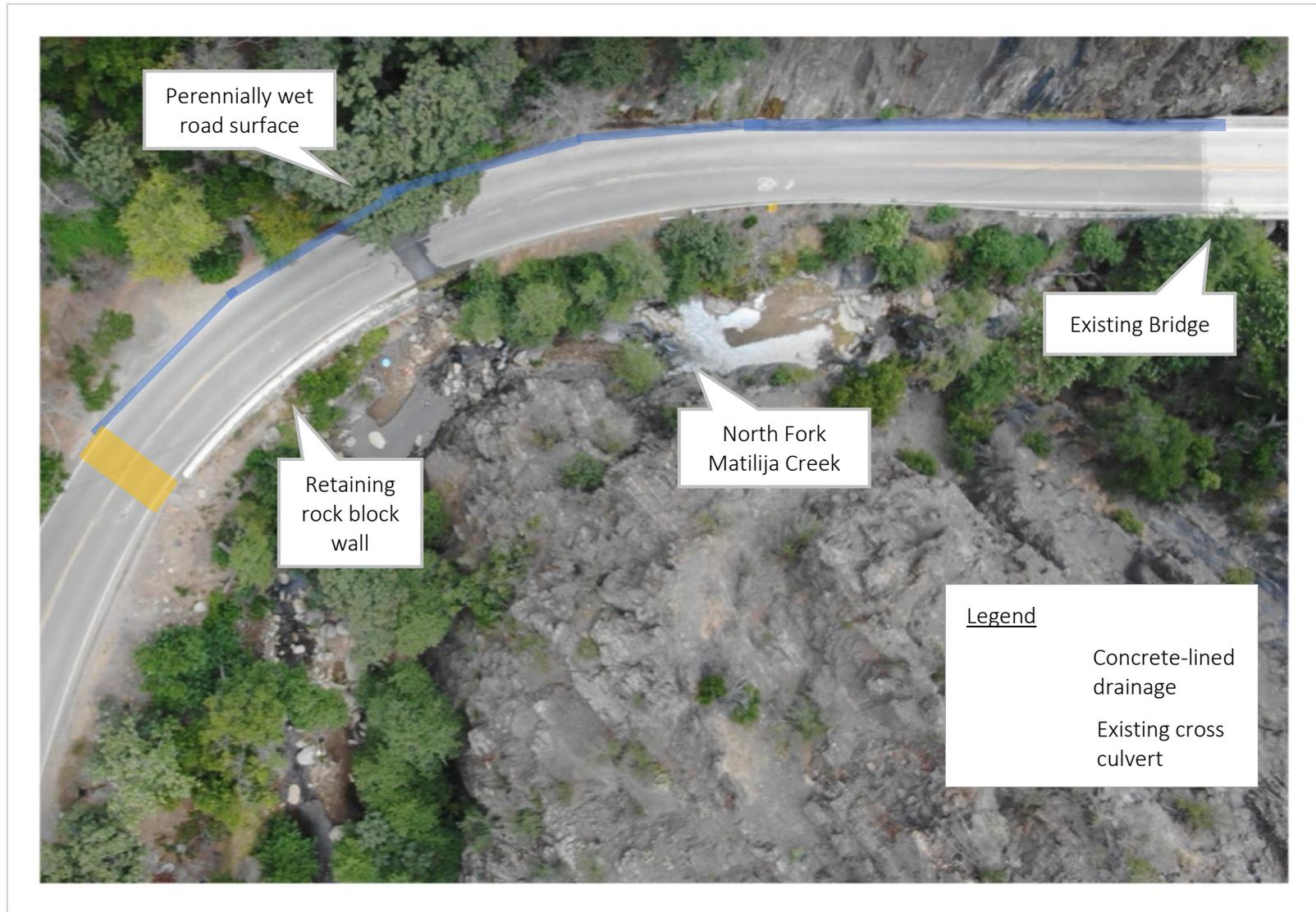


Figure 6. Remaining Rock Block Barrier within Project Limits

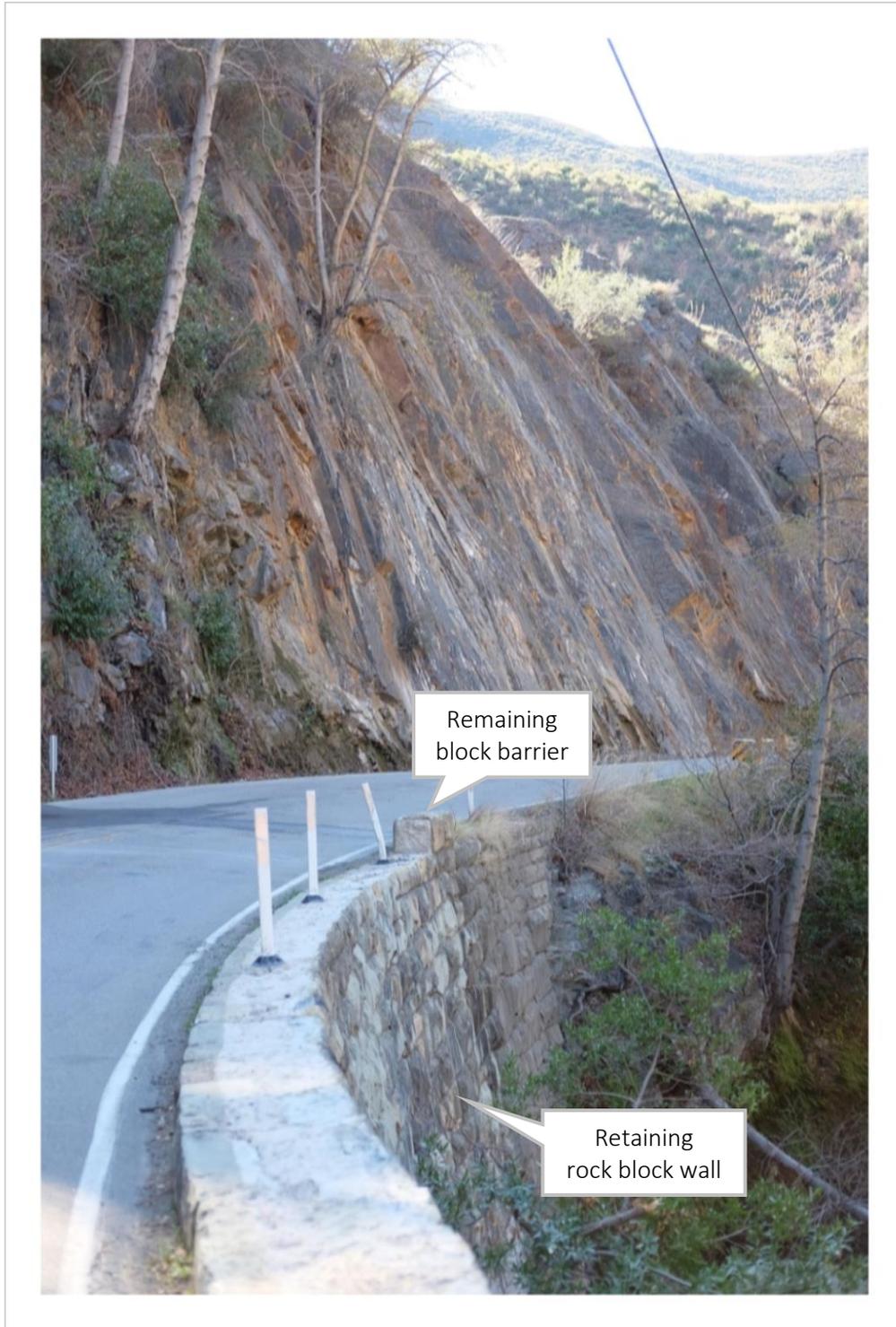


Figure 7. North Fork Matilija Creek adjacent to Roadway

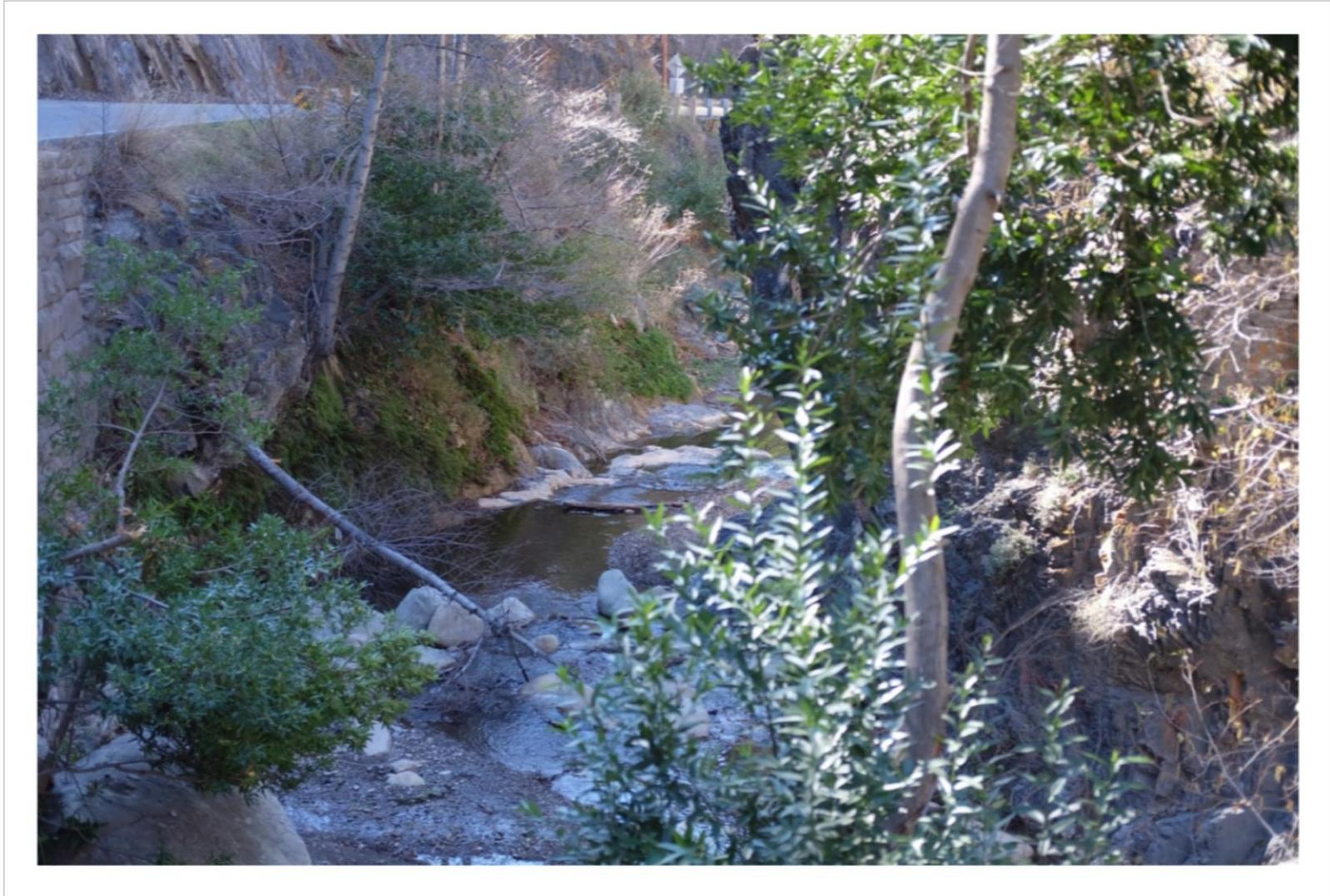


Figure 8. Wet Pavement caused by Springwater and Protruding Rock on Roadway



Figure 9. Protruding Rock and Springwater



Figure 10. Protruding Rock and Springwater Magnified



### **1.5.1 Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives**

Common design features of both Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2 include:

- Increasing lane width from ten-foot-six-inch lanes to 11-foot lanes
- Replacing remaining rock block with an aesthetically treated concrete barrier
- Incorporating a tubular handrailing on top of concrete barrier
- Constructing a shallow two feet wide and six-inch deep concrete-lined drainage interceptor ditch
- Applying a high friction surface treatment to the perennially wet section of the roadway
- Implementing all standard measures related to air quality, noise, water quality, etc.

### **1.5.2 Unique Features of Build Alternatives**

Build Alternative 1 will include:

- Constructing a two-foot shoulder in addition to increasing lane widths
- Demolishing the full width of the current asphalt concrete roadway (southbound direction)
- Coldplaning and overlaying operations in the entire final constructed roadway to avoid grade breaks

Build Alternative 2 will include:

- Demolishing half of the current asphalt concrete roadway (southbound direction)
- Coldplaning and overlaying operations in half of the roadway (northbound direction) to avoid grade breaks

### **1.5.3 Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Alternatives**

Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) were not considered and discussed as part of this project because they are irrelevant to the purpose of this project. The project does not increase the number of vehicles on the road for TSM and TDM because it is a safety enhancement project. Therefore, it is not evaluated as a part of the project. TSM strategies increase the efficiency of existing facilities and are actions that increase the number of vehicle trips a facility can carry without increasing the number of through lanes. TDM focuses on regional means of increasing vehicle occupancy and reducing the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled.

## 1.6 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative will maintain the existing configuration of SR 33 and no additional improvements will be made to the existing facility. The roadway will remain at a lane width of ten feet six inches, and aside from the remaining rock block, there will be no barriers left protecting travelers on the road. Furthermore, the spring will continue to flow across the road down to the adjacent creek, which perpetuates a wet section of the roadway. All the deficiencies mentioned above will continue as a result of the No-Build Alternative.

## 1.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion

This section includes all alternatives that were considered during the project development process, but were eliminated from further consideration and gives the reason for rejection.

**Six-Foot-Nine-Inch Roadway Widening (Moment Slabs + CIDH Piles in Creek) Alternative.** This alternative proposes to widen the roadway by six feet nine inches through a combination of two methods:

- 1) installation of cantilever slabs (approximately 310 linear feet) supported by 24-inch Cast-In-Drilled Hole (CIDH) piles (spaced at 40 feet intervals) and 30-inch by 30-inch cap beams as well as
- 2) installation of self-supported continuous cantilever slab (approximately 170 linear feet) all within the project limits.

This alternative was rejected because it would require drilling CIDH piles into the North Fork Matilija Creek and would entail adverse permanent impacts to the steelhead trout and its critical habitat as well as the California red-legged frog.

**Eight to Nine-Foot Roadway Widening (New Bridge Structure + CIDH Piles) Alternative.** This alternative proposes to widen the roadway by eight to nine feet through a combination of two methods:

- 1) installation of a new bridge structure (approximately 365 linear feet) using precast concrete slabs supported on precast bent caps and 36-inch CIDH piles (spaced at 45-foot intervals) and concrete barrier cantilever moment slabs as well as
- 2) installation of self-supported continuous concrete cantilevered slabs (approximately 80 linear feet) all within the project limits.

This alternative was rejected due to the potential for substantial impacts related to the eight 55-hour weekend and the six-month full roadway closure. It would require local residents and drivers to take long detour routes (approximately 120 miles) to reach their intended destination.

There would also be permanent adverse impacts to the riparian habitat and critical habitat of the steelhead trout and California red-legged frog. In addition, the cost of this alternative would exceed the budget due to the substantial costs required for construction, traffic closures and environmental mitigation.

### **1.7.1 Design Features Considered for Each Build Alternative but Eliminated from Further Discussion**

The following design features were considered for each build alternative during the project development process, but were eliminated from further consideration, and gives the reason for rejection.

**Rock Cut Design Feature.** This design feature would include shaving to even out the protruding rock crop over the northbound lane of the roadway. This would modify the course of the natural spring that splashes into the roadway to run alongside of the road instead.

This design feature was rejected because the rock outcrop is considered a sensitive resource to both the California Department Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and United States Forest Service (USFS). Representatives from CDFW and USFS expressed the importance to keep the rock intact because it is a natural feature during a field site visit (October 10, 2019). Furthermore, the rock outcrop is a local landmark in a designated scenic highway. Caltrans agreed that this was an important visual feature.

**Grated Inlet/Northbound Concrete Barrier Design Feature.** This design feature would install a grated inlet drainage system along the northbound direction to divert water from the roadway into the existing creek. This design feature also includes a concrete barrier on the northbound side of the road to prevent large debris from entering the roadway. The grated drainage system would be constructed behind the concrete barrier.

This alternative was rejected because the concrete barrier would prevent rock debris from entering the roadway and cause rocks to clog up the grated inlet behind the concrete barrier. After consulting with Caltrans' Maintenance Supervisor, this design feature was rejected because it would be difficult to remove the rocks and clean the grated inlets.

**Slope Net Design Feature.** This design feature would include placing a net over the entire slope of the cliff to minimize the amount of debris falling. This permanent feature would keep rocks in place to prevent rockfall and prevent the grated inlet design feature from clogging.

The design feature was rejected because it would permanently impact the habitat of Ojai fritillary, a USFS sensitive species. The Ojai fritillary is known to exist only within this area, and impacting the cliff would adversely affect the sensitive species. Furthermore, adding a slope net to the cliff would also impair the visual aesthetics of the local landmark and the designated scenic highway.

## 1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

The permits, reviews, and approvals required for project construction is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Permits/Approvals**

Agency	Permit, Licenses, Agreements, and/or Certifications	Status
National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS)	Section 7 Consultation for Threatened and Endangered Species	Updated Letter to initiate formal consultation sent to NMFS on August 27, 2020.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	Application for 1602 permit expected after Final Environmental Document (FED) approval during the final design phase
California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB)	Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Application for Section 401 permit expected after FED approval during the final design phase
United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Section 404 Nationwide Permit	Application for Section 404 permit expected after FED approval during the final design phase
United States Forest Service (USFS)	Special Use Permit	Application for Special Use permit expected after FED approval during the final design phase
Ventura County Resource Management Agency	Ministerial Tree Permit	Application for Ministerial Tree permit expected after FED approval during the final design phase
California Transportation Commission (CTC)	CTC vote to approve funds	CTC will vote to approve funding for the project after FED approval

Caltrans has coordinated with the above agencies to determine the approvals/permits needed for project construction.

## Chapter 2 – Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

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### TOPIC CONSIDERED BUT DETERMINED NOT TO BE RELEVANT

As part of the scoping and environmental analysis carried out for the project, the following environmental issues were considered but no adverse impacts were identified. As a result, there is no further discussion about these issues in this document.

**Coastal Zone** – There will be no impact on coastal resources because the project is not located within the coastal zone.

**Wild and Scenic Rivers** – There will be no impact on wild and scenic river resources because there are no wild or scenic rivers within the project area.

**Farmland/Timberlands** – There will be no impact on farmland and timberland resources because the project is not located within or adjacent to farmlands and/or timberlands.

**Hydrology and Floodplain** – There will be no impacts related to hydrology and floodplain because the project is not located within a 100-year base floodplain.

**Community Character and Cohesion** – The project will have no impacts to community character and cohesion as the project site is located within rural open space in Los Padres National Forest. No communities are within a mile of the project vicinity.

**Environmental Justice** – The project will have no effect on minority or low-income populations because minority and/or low-income populations have not been identified. See Section 2.1.3 on Community Impacts. No minority or low-income populations that would be adversely affected by the proposed project have been identified as determined above. Therefore, this project is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12898.

**Relocations and Real Property Acquisition** – There will be no relocation impacts because the project will not involve real property acquisitions.

**Air Quality** – Pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 93.126, the project is exempt from all emissions analyses and the requirement to determine conformity because the scope of work is listed in Table 2 under the subtitle “Safety” and classification “Widen narrow pavements or reconstructing bridges (no additional travel lanes).” However, all local, state, and regional air quality standard protocols will be implemented throughout construction and air quality impacts

as a result of construction will be minimized, to the extent feasible. Please refer to Appendix C – Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary for further information.

**Noise** – This project does not qualify as a Type I project as defined in 23 CFR 772. Therefore, a noise study is not required or prepared as part of this project.

**Energy** – There will be minimal impacts to energy as the project is not a capacity increasing project. Measures to reduce impacts on energy will be included as part of the Climate Change Chapter.

From here on forth, references to the “project” refers to Build Alternatives 1 and 2.

## Cumulative Impacts

### *Regulatory Setting*

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed project. A cumulative effect assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, alteration of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as changes in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts. The definition of cumulative impacts under CEQA can be found in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines. A definition of cumulative impacts under the NEPA can be found in 40 CFR Section 1508.7.

Because the project is located in the rural area within Los Padres National Forest, typical construction projects include safety enhancement, maintenance, and emergency roadway type projects (Table 4). Other potential future projects within a 5-mile radius of the project vicinity are described in Table 6.

**Table 4. Past, Present, and Future Transportation Projects within 5 miles of Project Vicinity**

<b>EA/ EFIS</b>	<b>Project Location (SR-33 Post Miles)</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>End of Construction</b>
35520/ 0719000009	5.7-27	Construct stormwater devices and maintenance vehicle pullouts at various locations	7/30/26
29650/ 0713000099	15.8-16.1	Widen bridge deck, construct new abutments, widen embankments, pave shoulders, and upgrade railing to concrete barrier	2/15/24
4W590/ 0719000101	11.2-48.5	Dig out failed concrete and install slurry seal and shoulder backing	6/1/23
34270/ 0717000324	22.0-22.2	Construct a 110' soldier pile retaining wall adjacent to the location of erosion, repair damaged pavement, upgrade existing Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) to Midwest Guardrail System (MGS), and replace drainage pipes	3/30/23
4T850/ 0716000187	20.3	Replace two damaged corrugated metal pipes with an open bottom culvert to facilitate fish passage	12/22/22
1XM40/ 0719000232	22.2	Director's Order: Clear debris, repair pavement cracking, stabilize eroded slope, and reconstruct drainage infrastructure	2/19/20
1XG70/ 0718000211	13.2-30.5	Director's Order: Replace fire damaged MBGR with MGS; Replace fire damaged crash cushions	12/18/19
1XK90/ 0719000167	14.0-19.0	Director's Order: Repair eroded slope, clean drainages, and dispose of debris	2/25/19
1XC90/ 0717000266	15.4-52.0	Director's Order: Remove landslide debris, stabilize slope, clean and repair drainage system, repair MBGR and shoulder backing	9/28/18
1XG80/ 0718000216	13.2-30.5	Director's Order: Repair fire and storm damaged slopes, construct racks, and replace damaged drainage systems	2/17/18
30520/ 0714000092	15.7	Remove rock slope protection and replace it with soil nail wall to prevent future erosion and stabilize the roadway	9/10/14

## 2.1 Human Environment

### 2.1.1 Land Use and Planning

#### *Affected Environment*

General plan information for unincorporated Ventura County is maintained in the Ventura County General Plan. General plans provide a blueprint for the future development of an area and outlines the permitted uses and development densities for specific parcels. Developers use the general plan as a guidance on how to build on existing neighborhoods and maintain the existing qualities that distinguish an area.<sup>1</sup>

**Ventura County General Plan 2016:** The proposed project is located in unincorporated Ventura County. The Ventura County General Plan guides the land use for this specific region in unincorporated Ventura County.

The following land use categories are established in the Ventura County General Plan:

- Urban
  - Building intensity exceeds 1 dwelling unit per two acres
- Existing Community
  - Building intensity exceeds 1 dwelling unit per two acres
- Rural
  - Building intensity not to exceed 1 dwelling unit per two acres
- Agricultural
  - Lands suitable for the cultivation of crops and raising livestock
- Open Space
  - Unimproved land devoted to the preservation of natural resources, including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plants, wildlife, and fish species and areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes
- State or Federal Facility
  - Federal and state facilities including forest and park lands, etc.
- Urban Reserve Overlay

#### 2.1.1.1 Existing and Future Land Use

Unincorporated Ventura County is characterized by its agricultural and vast open space lands. The open space lands are encumbered by rocky terrain, riparian vegetation, and transverse creeks. The United States Forest Service (USFS) governs a large portion of the open space in the area. The proposed project is within north half of the Ventura Unincorporated Area.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/plans/Goals-Policies-and-Programs.pdf>

**North Half, Ventura County Unincorporated Area.** The North Half area in unincorporated Ventura County covers about 573,741 acres of land, which makes up more than half of the total acreage in the whole Ventura County (1,125,999 acres).<sup>2</sup> Over 99 percent of this land is designated as open space, of which 96 percent is within the Los Padres National Forest (550,211 acres), 3 percent is privately owned (16,514 acres), and less than 1 percent is within the Ojai Area Plan (5663 acres). Table 5 summarizes the land use capacities for the North Half area of Ventura County.

**Table 5. Land Use Designations in North Half, Unincorporated Ventura County**

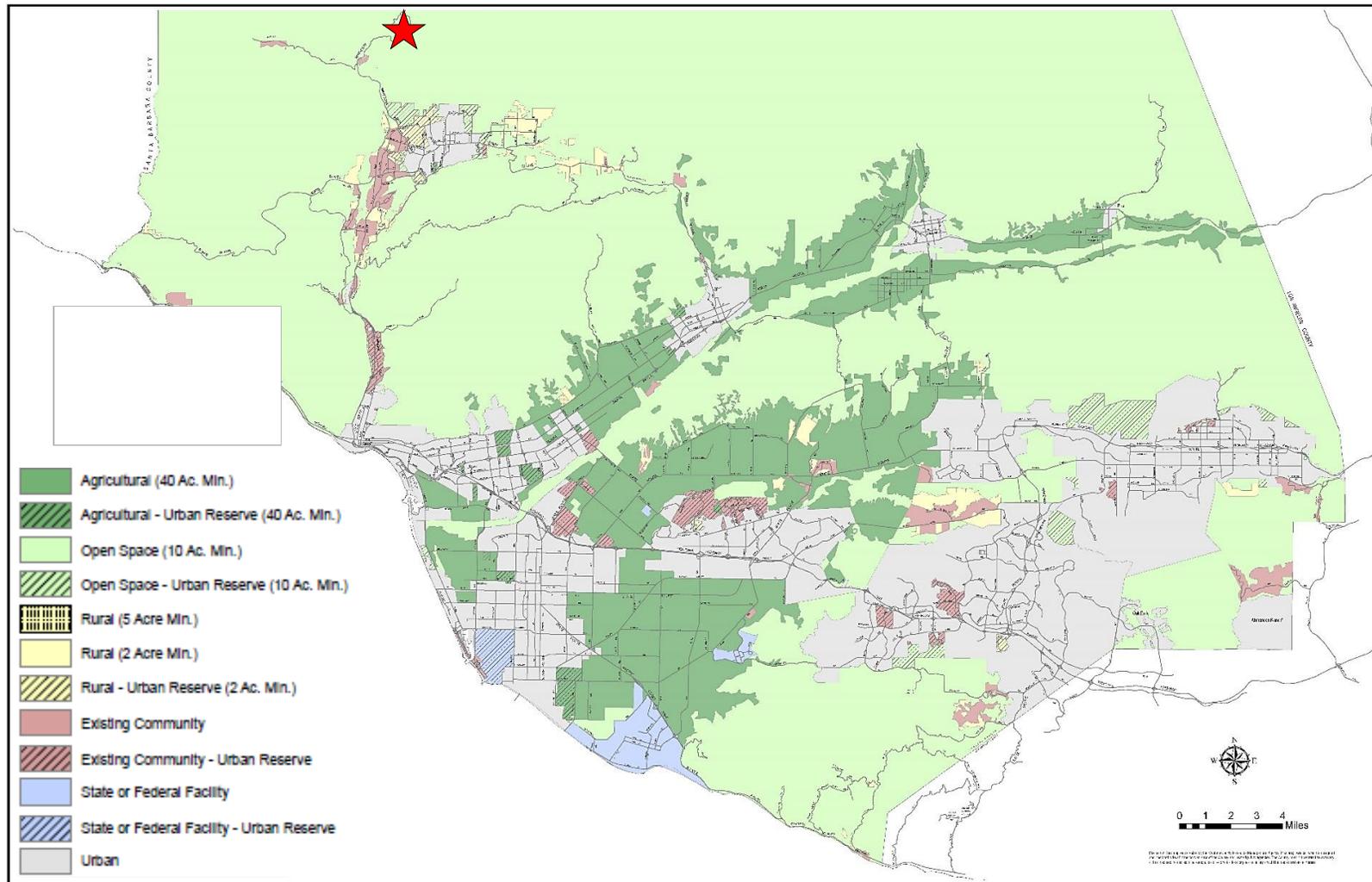
Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage
<b>Open Space (Federal Land)</b>	550,211	95.9%
<b>Open Space (Privately Owned)</b>	16,514	2.9%
<b>Ojai Area Plan Open Space</b>	5,663	0.9%
<b>Rural</b>	1,113	0.2%
<b>Agricultural</b>	62	< 0.1%
<b>Matilija Canyon Existing Community</b>	132	< 0.1%
<b>North Fork Springs Existing Community</b>	46	< 0.1%
<b>Total City Acreage</b>	<b>573,741</b>	<b>100%</b>

Land use patterns within the study area reflect primarily open space under the jurisdiction of USFS. The land use assessment was performed through reviewing an array of aerial photographs, maps, windshield surveys, and literature review. The Ventura County General Plan was used to gather relevant information about zoning and land use designations in the project limits. The existing land uses around the project vicinity are shown in Figure 11.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/plans/GENERAL\\_PLAN\\_Land\\_Use\\_Appendix.pdf](https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/plans/GENERAL_PLAN_Land_Use_Appendix.pdf)

Figure 11. Ventura County General Plan Land Use Map<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/plans/Goals-Policies-and-Programs.pdf>

**County of Ventura.** Land use patterns within the vicinity of the project is designated as open space. Ventura County is bound by Kern County in the north, Santa Barbara County to the west, and the City of Ojai to the south (Figure 11).

**Development Trends Near the Study Area**

The North Half area of unincorporated Ventura County is primarily dedicated as open space with small communities spread out far in between. Little growth is expected in this area as most of the space is reserved for the preservation of natural resources.

New construction is subject to the plans and policies set out in the regional, state, and local plans addressed in Section 2.1.1.2. Table 6 summarizes the new development projects proposed within 5 miles of the project vicinity as of September 2020. Figure 12 shows all the development projects within relative to the project location as of September 2020. Status of development projects within the vicinity are updated by Ventura County Resource Management Agency (VCRMA) on a monthly basis.

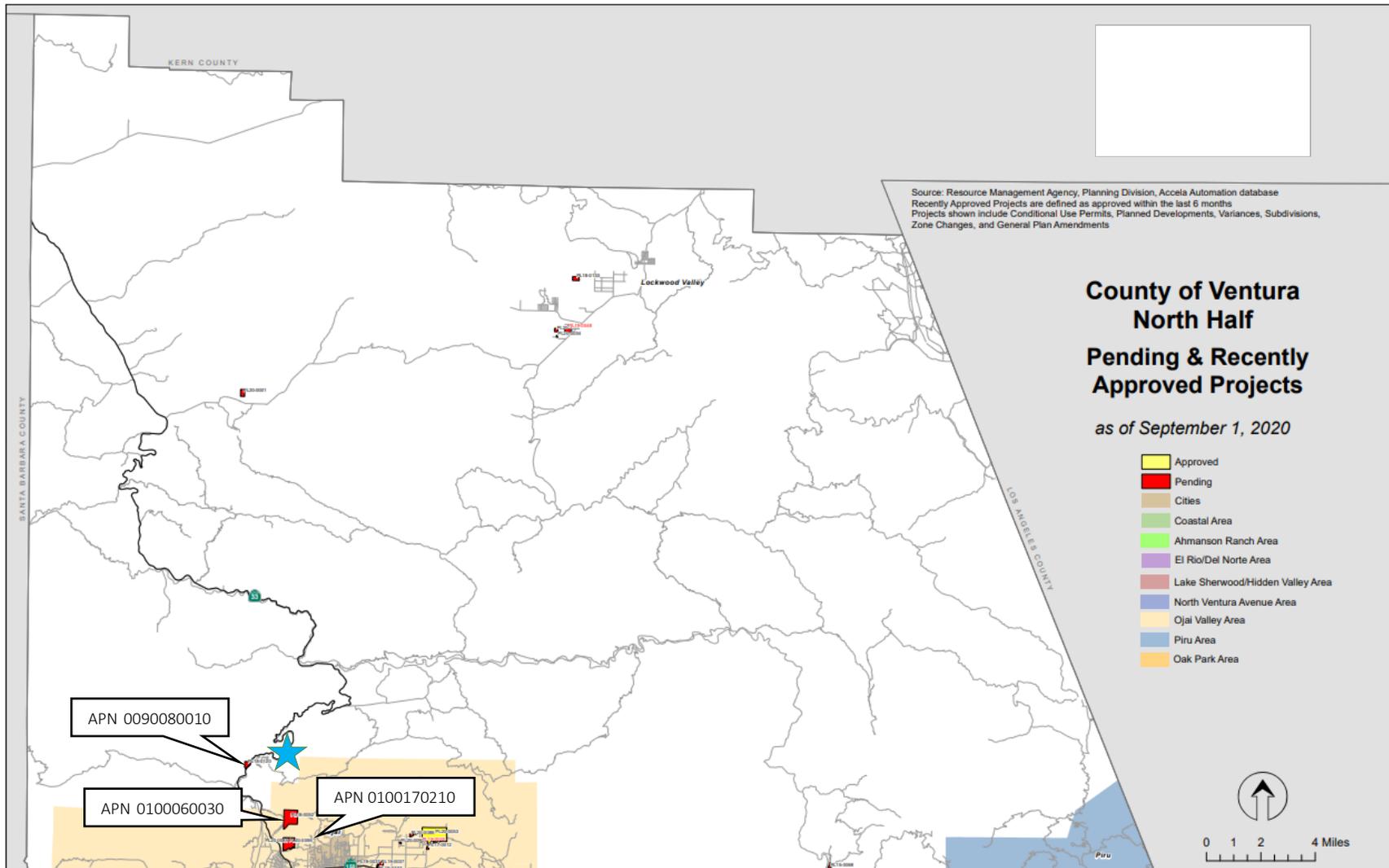
**Table 6. Development Trends in the Study Area<sup>4</sup>**

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	Proposed Uses	Status
0090080010	Adjusting lot lines between two legal lots	Pending— Preparing for Hearing
0100060030	Adding 3 new parcels, a new building, and six 432 sq. ft. cabins to the camping facility	Pending— Preparing Environmental Document
0100170210	Installing a 40 feet tall Mono-Eucalyptus tree with 5 feet of Branches on top	Pending – Completeness Revision In Progress

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<sup>4</sup> <https://vcrma.org/recently-approved-pending-projects>

Figure 12. Pending and Recently Approved Projects within 5 miles of the Project Vicinity<sup>5</sup>



### 2.1.1.2 Consistency with Relevant State, Regional, and Locals Plans and Programs

The following are relevant state, regional, and local plans and programs:

#### State Plans

**California Transportation Plan 2040 (CTP 2040)**<sup>6</sup> – The CTP 2040 outlines goals and policies to achieve a safe, sustainable, universally accessible and globally competitive transportation system that provides reliable and efficient mobility for people, goods, and services. The CTP 2040 ties together several inter-related plans and programs that define and plan transportation in California, including the goals of long-range transportation planning and other relevant state, local, and regional plans and programs that may impact the transportation system. The proposed project is consistent with the following goals and policies:

#### **Goal 4 – Improve Public Safety and Security**

**Policy 1** – Reduce fatalities, serious injuries, and collisions

#### **Goal 5 – Foster Livable and Healthy Communities and Promote Social Equity**

**Policy 1** – Expand collaboration and community engagement in multimodal transportation planning and decision-making

#### **Goal 6 – Practice Environmental Stewardship**

**Policy 1** – Integrate environmental considerations in all stages of planning and implementation

**Policy 2** – Minimize environmental impacts during construction of transportation projects where feasible by developing and disseminating a list of construction best practices

#### Regional Plans

#### **2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2016 RTP/SCS)**<sup>7</sup>–

The 2016 RTP/SCS provides a long-range planning framework for visions, policies, and performance measures to address regional transportation and land use challenges and opportunities. The plan was created through a collaborative effort with internal and external stakeholders within the counties of the region, ensuring that needs are balanced and sustainably achieved. The document is updated every four years. The proposed project is consistent with the following goals and policies of the 2016 RTP/SCS:

**Goal 2** – Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region

**Goal 3** – Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region

**Goal 4** – Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system

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<sup>6</sup> <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/finalctp2040-report-webready.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://scagrtpscs.net/Documents/2016/final/f2016RTPSCS.pdf>

**Goal 6** – Protect the environment and health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation (e.g., bicycling and walking).

### **Local Plans**

**Ventura County General Plan 2016<sup>8</sup>** – The Ventura County General Plan sets forth goals, policies, and programs to manage and implement future growth and land uses in unincorporated Ventura County. The Ventura County General Plan consists of countywide goals, policies, and programs containing four chapters (resources, hazards, land use, and public facilities/services), as well as four appendices that contain background information on each respective element. In addition, specific area plans are also included to cover the diverse geographical areas of the County. The following goals, policies, and programs of the proposed project are consistent with the general plan:

**Goal 1.1.1.3** – Identify and work with all entities responsible for the protection, management and enhancement of the County's resources.

**Goal 1.2.1.2** – Diligently seek and promote a level of air quality that protects public health, safety, and welfare, and seek to attain and maintain the State and Federal Ambient Air Quality standards.

**Goal 1.5.2.5** – The California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Audubon Society and the California Native Plant Society shall be consulted when *discretionary development* may affect significant *biological resources*. The National Park Service shall also be consulted regarding *discretionary development* within the Santa Monica Mountains or Oak Park Area.

**Goal 1.7.1.1** – Preserve and protect the significant open views and visual resources of the County.

**Goal 1.8.1.1** – Identify, inventory, preserve and protect the *paleontological* and *cultural resources* of Ventura County (including *archaeological*, *historical* and Native American resources) for their scientific, educational and cultural value.

**Goal 2.1.1.1** – Identify all major hazards and other physical constraints to development in Ventura County, and convey this information to all appropriate parties.

**Goal 2.1.1.2** – Protect public health, safety and general welfare from identified hazards and potential disasters.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/plans/Goals-Policies-and-Programs.pdf>

**Goal 2.2.2.5** – Roads, streets, highways, utility conduits, and oil and gas pipelines, shall be planned to avoid crossing active faults where feasible. When such location is unavoidable, the design shall include measures to reduce the effects of any fault movement as much as possible.

**Goal 2.13.1.1** – Minimize the risk of loss of life injury, damage to structures, and economic and social dislocations resulting from fire hazards.

**Goal 2.15.1.1** – Minimize the risk of loss of life, injury, serious illness, damage to property, and economic and social dislocations resulting from the use, transport, treatment and disposal of *hazardous materials* and *hazardous wastes*.

**Goal 2.15.1.2** – Locate potentially hazardous facilities and operations in areas that would not expose the public to a significant risk of injury, loss of life, or property damage.

**Goal 2.16.1.1** – To protect the health, safety and general welfare of County residents by elimination or avoidance of adverse noise impacts on existing and future *noise sensitive uses*.

**Goal 4.2.1.1** – Facilitate the safe and efficient movement of persons and goods by encouraging the design, construction, and maintenance of an integrated transportation and circulation system consisting of regional and local roads, bus transit, bike paths, ridesharing, rail transit and freight service, airports and harbors.

**Goal 4.2.1.3** – Ensure that the design, sequencing and timing of road widening projects are consistent with the goals, policies and programs of the General Plan, and that County road widening projects have adequate public review.

**Goal 4.2.1.9** – Encourage the use of bicycling and ridesharing (e.g., carpooling, vanpooling, and bus pooling) as a percentage of total employee commute trips throughout the County in order to reduce vehicular trips and miles traveled and consequently vehicular emissions, traffic congestion, energy usage, and ambient noise levels.

**Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan 2005<sup>9</sup>** – The goals of the Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan focus on the sustainability of public forest lands through conservative management and proper maintenance of healthy forests. The plan provides tools and strategies in which management staff uses to manifest the objectives laid forth in the plan. Past performance history and anticipated performance in three to five-year increments are also described in the land management plan. The following goals, policies, and programs of the proposed project are consistent with the plan:

**Tribal 2** – Government to Government Relations

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5337817.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5337817.pdf)

**Policy 1** – Promote collaborative partnerships for heritage resource management, ecosystem restoration, comprehensive fire planning, and to recognize historic Native American access rights to land areas and resources

**IS 1** – Invasive and Nonnative Species Prevention and Control

**Policy 2** – Limit ground disturbance to the minimum area necessary during project activities. Promote conditions to enhance the recovery of vegetation in project planning, design, and implementation. Use native plant materials as needed to restore disturbed sites to prevent the introduction or reintroduction of invasive nonnative species. Conduct follow-up inspections of ground disturbing activities to monitor the effectiveness of restoration efforts in reducing or preventing the introduction or re-introduction of invasive non-native plants

**WAT 2** – Water Management

**Policy 9** – To maintain or improve habitat containing threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species, coordinate activities with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (NMFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) and other appropriate agencies involved in recommending instream flow and surface water requirements for waterways

**WAT 3** – Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate, and Sensitive Species Management

**Policy 1** – Comply with all federal and state of California hazardous waste materials/waste requirements

**Policy 2** – Comply with federal and state of California requirements for emergency spill response on spills that affect National Forest System lands

**LM 1** – Landscape Character

**Policy 1** – Maintain the integrity of the expansive, unencumbered landscapes and traditional cultural features that provide the distinctive character of the place

**Policy 2** – Promote the planning and improvement of infrastructure along scenic travel routes

**San Jacinto Reyes Corridor Management Plan 2004**—A subset of the forest plan, the San Jacinto Reyes Corridor Management Plan, provides site-specific guidance for the scenic byway corridor in conjunction with the Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan. The Corridor Management Plans lays out goals and strategies for preserving and enhancing the qualities of the Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway (also known as SR 33). The following design guidelines would be used to preserve the scenic byway’s qualities and would be consistent with the proposed project:

## Construction Materials

**Guideline 1** — Use stucco, concrete, and rock wherever possible. When rock is used, it should be irregular and rounded, using local materials that mimic local area (e.g. Piedra Blanca). Tints should be used in mortars to match native rock colors

**Guideline 5** – Use strongly textured materials to create a pleasing display of light and shadow patterns.

## Colors and Styles

**Guideline 1** – Use muted earth tones, including brown, tan, gray, gray-green, olive, and sage. Avoid deep, rich greens

**Guideline 3** – Structures should blend in with the natural environment in a way that doesn't detract from the natural beauty or scenic vistas

## *Environmental Consequences*

### No-Build Alternative

There would be no impacts to land use under the No-Build Alternative. However, the roadway will remain at its current state with no further improvements. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative will be inconsistent with the state, regional, and local mobility objectives for roadway improvements and safety enhancements.

### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

**Consistency with State Plans** – Build Alternatives 1 and 2 proposes to widen the roadway by extending the cantilever slab by four feet nine inches, and two feet nine inches, respectively. The Build Alternatives also propose to replace the rock barrier, install tubular hand railings, apply high friction surface treatment and construct a concrete-lined drainage ditch to divert water away from running on the travel lanes. The Build Alternatives would widen the roadway and enhance public safety for all travelers. As a result, the Build Alternatives would be consistent with the CTP 2040 goals and policies by improving public safety through lowering the number of fatalities, injuries, and collisions.

**Consistency with Regional Plans** – The purpose of Build Alternatives 1 and 2 is to enhance safety for travelers, pedestrians, and bicyclists on the road. The goal of the 2016 RTP/SCS specifies the need to maximize mobility, accessibility, and enhance safety for all peoples and goods in the region. Construction of the Build Alternatives would enhance safety measures for all travelers on the road. These objectives all align with 2016 RTP/SCS's goals of mobility, safety, and sustainability.

**Consistency with Local Plans** – The Ventura County General Plan encourages the safe and efficient movement of people and goods through designing and constructing roadways that contribute to a viable transportation system. The goals and policies of the Ventura County General Plan also call for sufficient public review in the process and the adequate protection of resources during development. The Build Alternatives will widen the roadway, replace old rock barrier, promote mobility, and enhance safety for all travelers while gathering community input

and evaluating/minimizing the potential impacts of the proposed project, which aligns with the goals and policies of the local plan. The Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan emphasizes strategies to promote a healthy sustainable forest for future generations to come. Most of the strategies involve coordinating with the City/County, resource agencies, tribal organizations, etc. to protect and preserve cultural/biological resources in the forest. Caltrans will coordinate with all necessary agencies throughout the planning process to ensure that all resources in the area are documented and protected during the course of project construction. In addition, the proposed project also includes measures for aesthetic treatments on barriers, invasive species prevention, and standard best management practices that will align with the goals of the plan. The concrete barrier will be aesthetically treated (textured, stamped, and colored) to mimic with the natural environment, which is in line with the design guidelines set forth in the San Jacinto Reyes Corridor Management Plan. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the goals, policies, and guidelines outlined in the local plans.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

There are no impacts to land use and planning as a result of the proposed project because the proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the plans within the project vicinity. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The Build Alternatives are consistent with the regional, county, city, and local plans; therefore, no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are necessary for the proposed project.

### 2.1.1.3 Parks and Recreational Facilities

#### *Regulatory Setting*

The Park Preservation Act (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Sections 5400-5409) prohibits local and state agencies from acquiring any property which is in use as a public park at the time of acquisition unless the acquiring agency pays sufficient compensation or land, or both, to enable the operator of the park to replace the park land and any park facilities on that land.

#### *Affected Environment*

There are two parks and recreational facilities located within the Section 4(f) Study Area. The Section 4(f) Study Area includes facilities within or immediately adjacent to the project vicinity, and nearby properties. There are no parks and recreational facilities directly in the project area. The names and activities/features of each park and/or facility within the Section 4(f) Study Area are shown in Table 7. These recreational areas are all protected by the Park Preservation Act.

**Table 7. Parks and Recreational Facilities**

Name	Activities/Features
Wheeler Gorge Campground	Camping, Swimming, Fishing, Hiking, Biking <sup>10</sup>
Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center	Hiking, Picnicking <sup>11</sup>

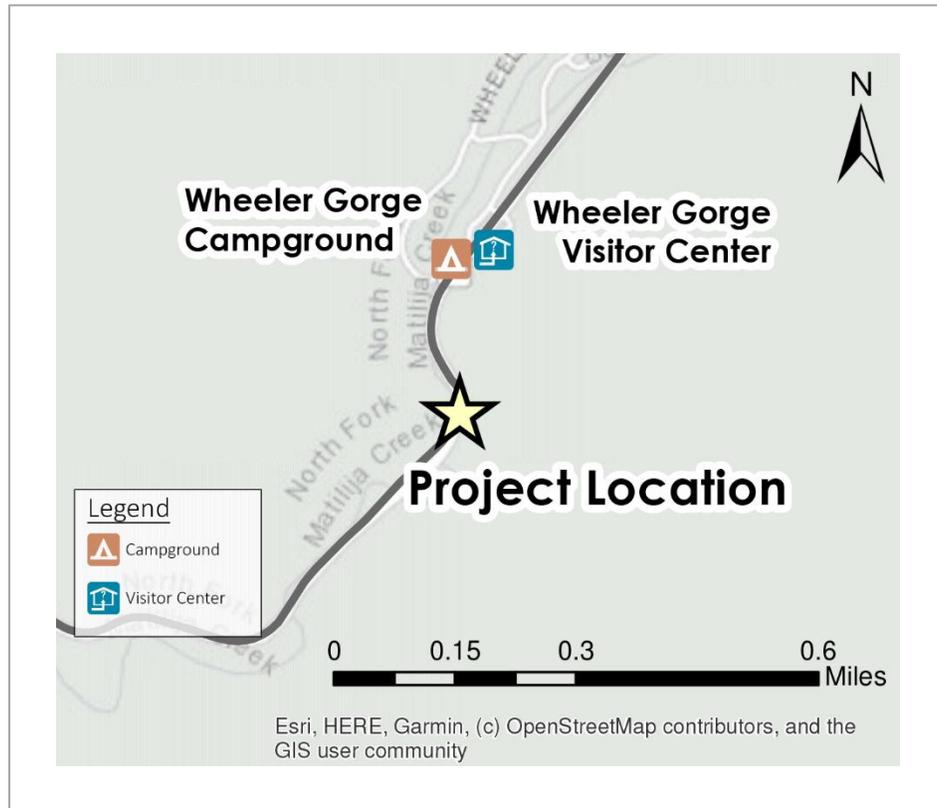
The locations of the park and recreational facilities within the Section 4(f) Study Area are shown in Figure 13. Both facilities are within 1000 feet of the project limits. Quiet hours for the Wheeler Gorge Campground is from 10:00pm – 6:00am and operation hours for the Wheeler Gorge Vistor Center is from 9:00am – 3:00pm.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/232138>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/lpnf/recarea/?recid=34149>

Figure 13. Parks/Recreational Facilities within the Section 4(f) Study Area



### *Environmental Consequences*

#### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative will have no effect on parks and/or other recreational facilities.

#### **Build Alternatives 1**

Under Build Alternative 1, there will be three 55-hour full roadway weekend closures, which will temporarily impact travelers visiting the recreational facilities in the Section 4(f) Study Area. Access to the facilities may be limited and visitors may experience 120-mile detours to get to the intended facility. Please see 2.1.4 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities for more information. However, this is temporary and the roads will resume their normal functions once project construction is over. There are no permanent traffic impacts to recreational facilities anticipated. No temporary or permanent construction noise impacts are anticipated for the recreational facilities under Build Alternative 1. The noise generated from construction activities will be far enough from the project vicinity to not be noticeable to users at the recreational facilities

There are parks and recreational facilities within the Section 4(f) Study Area that are protected by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. However, the project will not

“use” those facilities as defined by Section 4(f). Please see Appendix H – Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f) for additional details.

### **Build Alternative 2**

The impacts for Build Alternative 2 will be similar to Build Alternative 1 except that there will be no full roadway weekend closures at any point during project construction. One lane access will be available at all times during project construction. There will be no temporary traffic or noise impacts as a result of Build Alternative 2.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

There are no permanent and temporary cumulative impacts identified for parks and recreational facilities within the vicinity.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

Temporary traffic impacts to recreational facilities as a result of Build Alternative 1 will be minimized through the implementation of measures mentioned in 2.1.4 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.

The Build Alternatives will not have a “use” of Section 4(f) facilities as defined by the Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Therefore, no avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are required for the Build Alternatives under Section 4(f).

## 2.1.2 Growth

### *Regulatory Setting*

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which established the steps necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, require evaluation of the potential environmental effects of all proposed federal activities and programs. This provision includes a requirement to examine indirect effects, which may occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of a proposed action and at some time in the future. The CEQ regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1508.8) refer to these consequences as indirect impacts. Indirect impacts may include changes in land use, economic vitality, and population density, which are all elements of growth.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) also requires the analysis of a project's potential to induce growth. The CEQA guidelines (Section 15126.2[d]) require that environmental documents “...discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment...”

Caltrans has adopted a process known as “*first-cut-screening*” in order to assess the potential of growth-related impacts relative to the construction of proposed projects. This process eliminates further examination of growth-related impacts through a series of progressive questions. Based on the “*first-cut-screening*” criteria developed, the “*first-cut-screening*” reveals that no further analysis because the project will not change accessibility. Travel times, travel cost, and/or accessibility to employment, shopping, or other destinations will not be changed as a result of the project. In addition, the proposed project will not affect travel behavior, trip patterns, or the attractiveness of some areas to development over others. Therefore, there are no growth-related impacts associated with construction of the Build Alternatives.

### 2.1.3 Utilities/Emergency Services

#### *Affected Environment*

##### Utilities

Two strands of insulated telecommunication wires are suspended over the project area on the right curb. The project will not require relocation of these wires during construction.

##### Fire Protection

The Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) provides fire protection, medical aid, rescue, materials response, etc. to over 480,000 citizens in 848 square miles of its jurisdiction.<sup>12</sup>

The following VCFD locations are closest to the project vicinity (within 10 miles):

Location Name	Address
<b>Ojai Fire Station 21</b>	1201 E. Ojai Ave. Ojai, CA 93023
<b>Ojai Fire Station 22</b>	466 S. La Luna Ave. Ojai, CA 93023

##### Law Enforcement

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office is responsible for law enforcement that covers several cities including unincorporated areas of Ventura County.

The following law enforcement office is closest to the project vicinity (within 10 miles):

Location Name	Address
<b>Ojai Police Department</b>	402 S. Ventura St. Ojai, CA 93023

##### Hospitals

The following hospital is closest to the project vicinity (within 10 miles):

Location Name	Address
<b>Ojai Valley Community Hospital</b>	1306 Maricopa Hwy Ojai, CA 93023

#### *Environmental Consequences*

##### No-Build Alternative

There will be no impacts to utilities and emergency services under the No-Build Alternative as the roadway will remain the same.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://vcfd.org/about-vcfd/overview>

## **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

There are two utilities within the project vicinity. However, the scope of work does not require relocation of the wires. Therefore, no utility relocation impacts are anticipated for Build Alternative 1.

The following standard measure will be incorporated in the project to ensure potential impacts to utilities are minimized:

**U-1:** Should the scope of work change to require utility relocation, coordination with utility owners will be conducted to reduce impacts to utilities.

The closest emergency services including fire protection, law enforcement, and hospitals are approximately 10 miles away from the project site. During the length of construction, one travel lane will remain accessible to emergency responders at all times. Though emergency response ratios may be slightly impacted due to a one-lane closure, this is temporary and will cease once construction ends.

The following project features will be implemented during project construction to minimize potential impacts to utilities and emergency services.

**U-2:** A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be implemented during construction to minimize traffic delays caused by road closures. Coordination with local emergency/protection services will be conducted to avoid and minimize all potential impacts to emergency responders.

**U-3:** Emergency access will be maintained for emergency personnel even during full roadway closures. California Highway Patrol (CHP) would be on-site during the 55-hr closures and will coordinate with the Resident Engineer for any emergencies.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

There are no impacts anticipated for utilities as there is no utility relocation for the proposed project. Therefore, there will be no cumulative impacts to utility as a result of the proposed project. With the implementation of the standard measures above, there are no adverse cumulative impacts anticipated for the project.

## ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Utility relocations are not anticipated for the project. Therefore, there are no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures required for utilities. With the incorporation of the project measures mentioned above, there will be no long term adverse impacts to emergency services.

## 2.1.4 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

### *Regulatory Setting*

Caltrans, as assigned by the FHWA, directs that full consideration should be given to the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists during the development of Federal-aid highway projects (see 23 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 652). It further directs that the special needs of the elderly and the disabled must be considered in all Federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. When current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic presents a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort must be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the facility.

In July 1999, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued an Accessibility Policy Statement pledging a fully accessible multimodal transportation system. Accessibility in federally assisted programs is governed by the USDOT regulations (49 CFR 27) implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 794). The FHWA has enacted regulations for the implementation of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including a commitment to build transportation facilities that provide equal access for all persons. These regulations require application of the ADA requirements to federal-aid projects, including Transportation Enhancement Activities.

### *Affected Environment*

A Traffic and Collision Analysis was completed for this project in June 2020. The study area was in the State Route (SR) 33 two-lane highway between post-mile (PM) 18.88 and PM 19.04 in Ventura County.

### Traffic Data

According to Caltrans 2017 Traffic Volumes shown in Table 8, the project site is on a rural highway with low traffic volumes throughout the day. The highest Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) near the project location (PM 18.88/19.04) was south of Wheeler Hot Spring (PM 17.63) with AADT of 660 vehicles peak Month Daily Traffic of 840 vehicles per day. The Peak Hourly Volume is 150 vehicles per hour.

**Table 8. Traffic Volumes near Project Location**

<i>Route</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Post-mile</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Back Peak Hour</i>	<i>Back Peak Month</i>	<i>Back AADT</i>	<i>Ahead Peak Hour</i>	<i>Ahead Peak Month</i>	<i>Ahead AADT</i>
33	VEN	17.361	Wheeler Hot Springs	150	840	660	140	810	640
33	VEN	25.791	Rose Valley Rd	120	680	540	100	540	430

*Note: Back AADT, Peak Month, and Peak Hour usually represents traffic South or West of the count location. Ahead AADT, Peak Month, and Peak Hour usually represents traffic North or East of the count location. Listing of routes with their designated direction of travel.<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>13</sup> <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/census/traffic-volumes>

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

There are no Class I or Class II bikeways within the project area and the project area is not within a County Bicycle Trails Plan. However, bicyclists are still permitted to use the road.<sup>14</sup>

### *Environmental Consequences*

#### **No-Build Alternative**

Under the No-Build Alternative, everything will remain the same with the current alignment. Safety enhancements will not be constructed as a part of the No-Build Alternative.

#### **Build Alternative 1**

There will be no permanent traffic/transportation impacts as a result of Build Alternative 1. Traffic circulation will not be impacted because the widening would not add additional travel lanes. The proposed project is a safety project that will enhance safety by widening the roadway, adding safety barriers, and incorporating a high friction surface treatment. This is anticipated to reduce the amount of run-off-road collisions in this area due to sight distance and roadway widths. In addition, tubular railing will be added on top of the concrete barriers which will enhance the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists on the road.

#### *Temporary Impacts*

There will be three 55-hour extended weekend full roadway closures anticipated as a result of this alternative. It is estimated that the project will result in 120-mile detours during the three 55-hour closures due to the lack of access roads in the area. For remainder of construction, a one-lane reversible travel way will be available for public and emergency access. Full roadway closures will occur only during weekends and advanced notifications will be sent out to local residents as a part of the Transportation Management Plan, which will minimize traffic/circulation impacts in the area, to the extent feasible.

With the following standard measures incorporated in the project, potential impacts to traffic and circulation will be minimized:

**T-1:** A Traffic Management Plan will be established during the design phase of the project. This will include public information, motorists information, incident management, construction strategies, etc. The TMP will also maintain travel in both directions and minimize traffic delays and idling that can produce GHGs.

**T-2:** Caltrans will coordinate with Media Affairs and local agencies at the earliest possible before construction to ensure impacts to travelers using the route will be minimized, as much as feasible.

**T-3:** Full roadway closures will require portable changeable messaging signs (PCMs) at various locations to alert motorists in advance of construction and during construction. PCMs are required to be installed 14 days in advance of closures.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://pwaportal.ventura.org/TD/Residents/Streets\\_and\\_Transportation/Reports\\_and\\_Programs/AP\\_VenturaCountyBikePlanFinal2008.pdf](http://pwaportal.ventura.org/TD/Residents/Streets_and_Transportation/Reports_and_Programs/AP_VenturaCountyBikePlanFinal2008.pdf)

**T-4:** The Public Information Officer will implement an intensive Public Awareness Campaign to minimize impacts to the travelling public.

**T-5:** Emergency access will be maintained for emergency personnel even during full roadway closures. California Highway Patrol (CHP) would be on-site during the 55-hr closures and will coordinate with the Resident Engineer for any emergencies.

### **Build Alternative 2**

There will be no permanent traffic/transportation impacts as a result of Build Alternative 2. All impacts will be similar to Build Alternative 1, except there will be no full roadway closures during construction as a result of this alternative.

#### *Temporary Impacts*

During construction, one reversible lane will be maintained at all times for public and emergency access. There may be minor delays to travel times and emergency response ratios. However, the transportation/circulation impacts are temporary and will cease once construction ends. The standard measures applicable to Build Alternative 1 mentioned above are also applicable to Build Alternative 2.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The proposed project is expected to enhance the safety of the roadway and will not alter roadway capacity. Therefore, long-term adverse cumulative impacts are not anticipated for the proposed project. Temporary construction traffic impacts combined with projects in the area going into construction around the same time (Table 4) may result in short-term traffic delays. The anticipated traffic impacts from construction are not permanent and will cease once construction ends. In addition, the traffic volumes in the area are low and therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in adverse cumulative traffic impacts. With the implementation of the standard measures and avoidance/minimization measures, there will be no adverse cumulative impacts to traffic during construction.

#### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to standard measures T-1 to T-5 mentioned above, the following avoidance and minimization measures will reduce project impacts to traffic and circulation:

**T-6:** One lane will remain opened at all times to allow for public and emergency access, unless a full roadway closure is required. Portable traffic signals will be installed on both approaching ends for reversible traffic control. Pilot cars may be used to guide motorists and bicyclists through construction zone.

## 2.1.5 Visual/Aesthetics

### *Regulatory Setting*

The NEPA of 1969, as amended, establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and *aesthetically* (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 USC 4331[b][2]). To further emphasize this point, the FHWA, in its implementation of NEPA (23 USC 109[h]), directs that final decisions on projects are to be made in the best overall public interest taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others, the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

The CEQA establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state “with...enjoyment of *aesthetic*, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities” (CA Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21001[b]).

California Streets and Highways Code Section 92.3 directs Caltrans to use drought resistant landscaping and recycled water when feasible, and incorporate native wildflowers and native and climate-appropriate vegetation into the planting design when appropriate.

### *Affected Environment*

The following information and subsequent conclusions evaluating the visual aesthetics are based on the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) (Caltrans, 2019). Based on the VIA level assessment completed, the project falls under a score of 14—negligible and very minor visual changes are anticipated for the proposed project.

### **Visual Setting**

SR 33 (Mariposa Highway) is a designated California Scenic Highway (from post-mile (PM) 17.5 near Wheeler Hot Springs to PM 57.5 Santa Barbara County line) and National Forest Scenic Byway (from PM 12 at City of Ojai to PM 49 near Lockwood Valley Road). The visual quality of the of SR 33 ranges from moderate to high value due primarily to the diverse natural vegetation, topographic variations, winding roadway, rock outcroppings, and minimal visibility of man-made developments. This scenic highway encompasses spectacular vista at various pull outs, lush riparian community along the many creeks in the area, and exposed rock cliffs on either side of the road intermittently throughout the route. Travelers in this area generally have high expectations and heightened visual sensitivity regarding the natural scenic quality of this route. The corridor is the subject of two known planning studies: “State Route 33 Transportation Concept Report” 2005 and “San Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan” 2004. The “San Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan” notably contains design guidelines that were considered and followed for the proposed project (Section 2.1.1.2 Consistency with Relevant State, Regional, and Locals Plans and Programs).

## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

There will be no modifications to the existing roadway in the No-Build Alternative. Therefore, there will be no impacts to visual aesthetics or visual quality of the scenic route.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

There is low potential for the proposed project to adversely affect the visual quality of the scenic corridor. The concrete barrier will be aesthetically treated to mimic natural rock and the color will be carefully selected to match the existing environment (Figure 4). The concrete barrier is designed to be consistent with the guidelines in the the San Jacinto Reyes Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2.1.1.2). The design of the barrier is consistent with the existing barriers along the scenic route and will appear to flow uniformly and continuously. The proposed project will not diminish the visual experience of the natural scenic beauty of the corridor as a whole.

The following standard measures will be incorporated in the project:

**V-1:** Erosion control measures are to be applied to all disturbed slopes. If seeds are to be used to revegetate the slope, native plant materials and seed species will be determined by Caltrans Landscape Architects and U.S. Forest Service plant resource specialists.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The impacts to visual aesthetics, in conjunction with past, present, and future projects, are not considered adverse. Therefore, there are no cumulative impacts anticipated as a result of this project.

## *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

The following minimization measures will be incorporated to minimize the visual impacts of the project:

**V-2:** All metal beam guardrail, walls, and barriers, are to be similar to and visually compatible with existing structures along the route.

**V-3:** The material, color and texture for all concrete works are to match or blend into the surrounding environment, i.e. existing barriers, wall, or rock slope.

**V-4:** Concrete wall or barrier will be stamped with a pattern to match or complement existing rock shape or form. The concrete will be stained with earth tone colors to complement surrounding rock/soil color.

**V-5:** Metallic surfaces are to be colored or treated with oxidizing agent to appear aged and non-reflective.

## 2.1.6 Cultural Resources

### *Regulatory Setting*

The term “cultural resources,” as used in this document, refers to the “built environment” (e.g., structures, bridges, railroads, water conveyance systems, etc.), places of traditional or cultural importance, and archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), regardless of significance. Under federal and state laws, cultural resources that meet certain criteria of significance are referred to by various terms including “historic properties,” “historic sites,” “historical resources,” and “tribal cultural resources.” Laws and regulations dealing with cultural resources include:

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, sets forth national policy and procedures for historic properties, defined as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects included in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) the opportunity to comment on those undertakings, following regulations issued by the ACHP (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 800). On January 1, 2014, the First Amended Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the FHWA, the ACHP, the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and Caltrans went into effect for Department projects, both state and local, with FHWA involvement. The PA implements the ACHP’s regulations, 36 CFR 800, streamlining the Section 106 process and delegating certain responsibilities to Caltrans. The FHWA’s responsibilities under the PA have been assigned to Caltrans as part of the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (23 USC 327).

The CEQA requires the consideration of cultural resources that are historical resources and tribal cultural resources, as well as “unique” archaeological resources. California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1 established the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and outlined the necessary criteria for a cultural resource to be considered eligible for listing in the CRHR and, therefore, a historical resource. Historical resources are defined in PRC Section 5020.1(j). In 2014, Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) added the term “tribal cultural resources” to CEQA, and AB 52 is commonly referenced instead of CEQA when discussing the process to identify tribal cultural resources (as well as identifying measures to avoid, preserve, or mitigate effects to them). Defined in PRC Section 21074(a), a tribal cultural resource is a CRHR or local register eligible site, feature, place, cultural landscape, or object which has a cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Tribal cultural resources must also meet the definition of a historical resource. Unique archaeological resources are referenced in PRC Section 21083.2.

PRC Section 5024 requires state agencies to identify and protect state-owned historical resources that meet the NRHP listing criteria. It further requires Caltrans to inventory state-owned structures in its rights-of-way. Sections 5024(f) and 5024.5 require state agencies to provide notice to and consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) before altering, transferring, relocating, or demolishing state-owned historical resources that are listed on or are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP or are registered or eligible for registration as California

Historical Landmarks. Procedures for compliance with PRC Section 5024 are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)<sup>15</sup> between Caltrans and SHPO, effective January 1, 2015. For most Federal-aid projects on the State Highway System, compliance with the Section 106 PA will satisfy the requirements of PRC Section 5024.

### *Affected Environment*

A Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) and a Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) were completed for this project on March 24, 2020. Methods used to complete the technical studies include defining the Area of Potential Effects (APE), conducting record searches on the Caltrans Cultural Resources Database (CCRD) and California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), reviewing As-Built plans, topographic maps, photograph archives, etc. and consulting with the County of Ventura, Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), local historical societies/preservation groups, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Los Padres Forest Association (LPFA), and Native American tribes/groups/representatives the NAHC identified. Field review surveys were also performed to assess the archaeological and built environment.

### **Area of Potential Effects (APE)**

The area of direct impact (Direct APE) includes all areas where potential ground disturbance and physical construction would occur, including project staging areas. The area of indirect effect (Indirect APE) includes all areas in which the project may potentially affect (through visual, audible, atmospheric intrusions, and vibrations from construction-related activities, etc.). The boundaries of the Direct APE and Indirect APE were drawn to include all expected horizontal and vertical extents of the proposed project as well as the anticipated permanent and temporary impacts of the proposed projects. Both Build Alternatives 1 and 2 are included in the studied APE.

The horizontal Direct APE is 0.76 acres and includes the limits of physical construction and the staging area. It extends a total of 43.75 feet west from the east edge of paving along a 500-foot linear segment of SR 33 and includes a portion of North Fork Matilija Creek. The vertical Direct APE extends to a maximum 40 feet below existing road grade and a maximum of 40 feet above existing road grade. The Indirect APE is identical to the Direct APE. The proposed project is located in the boundaries of Los Padres National Forest that contains rural land uses, including a campground nearby.

### **Archaeological Resources**

Record search results from the CCRD indicated that no archaeological resources have been recorded within the APE. In addition, consultation with the local government (County of Ventura), NAHC, Native American tribes/groups/individuals, USFS, and LPFA have all indicated that there are no known archaeological resources in the project vicinity. An archaeological field review conducted also indicated potential for buried archaeological deposits was extremely unlikely due to soil age, geomorphology, and past construction activities.

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/vol2/5024mou\\_15.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/vol2/5024mou_15.pdf)

### **Built Environment Resources**

SR 33, which includes the following features in the APE: a 21-foot wide asphalt roadbed, a rock block masonry wall, metal beam guard rails with wood posts, a lock rock barrier, and a low asphalt berm was evaluated as a built resource for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) and as a California Historical Landmark (CHL). It was determined that the SR 33 is not eligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR under any criterion due to a lack of historical and architectural significance, as well as a loss of physical integrity. It is also not eligible for designation as a CHL as it does not meet any of the evaluation criteria.

There are no historical properties present within the project APE for the purposes of NEPA, and there are no historical resources within the project APE for the purposes of CEQA.

### *Environmental Consequences*

#### **No-Build Alternative**

Under the No-Build Alternative, all existing structures will remain at its current state. Therefore, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.

#### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

##### ***Archaeological Resources***

No known archaeological resources were identified within the project APE. Based on the records search results, consultation, and field review, there is low potential for encountering archaeological deposits within the project vicinity.

The following standard measures are incorporated in the project to minimize the potential of impacting archaeological resources during construction:

**C-1:** If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.

**C-2:** If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety Code (H&SC) Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner contacted. If the remains are thought by the coroner to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), who, pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). At this time, the person who discovered the remains will contact the District Cultural Branch Chief so that they may work with the MLD on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

### ***Built Environment Resources***

Caltrans, pursuant to Section 106 PA Stipulation IX.A, has determined a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected is appropriate for the proposed project because there are no historical resources within the APE.

SR 33 is determined ineligible for listing in the NRHP, CRHR, and CHL due to a lack of historical and architectural significance, as well as a loss of physical integrity.

Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was conducted to obtain concurrence on the historic significance of SR 33. SHPO concurred with Caltrans determination that SR 33 was ineligible for the National Register on April 30, 2020. The concurrence letter can be found in Appendix E – Required Consultation/Concurrence Documentation.

### ***Section 4(f)***

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 provides protection for historic properties. There are no historic properties present within the APE; therefore, there are no Section 4(f) historic sites affected by the proposed project.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

There are no impacts to Archaeological or Built Environment resources as a result of this project. Therefore, cumulative impacts to cultural resources are not anticipated for this project.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

There are no impacts to historical or archaeological resources as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures are not necessary for the project.

## 2.2 Physical Environment

### 2.2.1 Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff

#### *Regulatory Setting*

##### **Federal Requirements: Clean Water Act**

In 1972, Congress amended the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, making the addition of pollutants to the waters of the United States (U.S.) from any point source<sup>16</sup> unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. This act and its amendments are known today as the Clean Water Act (CWA). Congress has amended the act several times. In the 1987 amendments, Congress directed dischargers of storm water from municipal and industrial/construction point sources to comply with the NPDES permit scheme. The following are important CWA sections:

- Sections 303 and 304 require states to issue water quality standards, criteria, and guidelines.
- Section 401 requires an applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. to obtain certification from the state that the discharge will comply with other provisions of the act. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request (see below).
- Section 402 establishes the NPDES, a permitting system for the discharges (except for dredge or fill material) of any pollutant into waters of the U.S. Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) administer this permitting program in California. Section 402(p) requires permits for discharges of storm water from industrial/construction and municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s).
- Section 404 establishes a permit program for the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. This permit program is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The goal of the CWA is “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.”

The USACE issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities when they are similar in nature and cause minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

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<sup>16</sup> A point source is any discrete conveyance such as a pipe or a man-made ditch.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of the USACE's Individual permits. There are two types of Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the USACE decision to approve is based on compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 230), and whether the permit approval is in the public interest. The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (Guidelines) were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the USACE, and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative which would have less adverse effects. The Guidelines state that the USACE may not issue a permit if there is a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S. and not have any other significant adverse environmental consequences. According to the Guidelines, documentation is needed that a sequence of avoidance, minimization, and compensation measures has been followed, in that order. The Guidelines also restrict permitting activities that violate water quality or toxic effluent<sup>17</sup> standards, jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, violate marine sanctuary protections, or cause "significant degradation" to waters of the U.S. In addition, every permit from the USACE, even if not subject to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, must meet general requirements. See 33 CFR 320.4. A discussion of the LEDPA determination, if any, for the document is included in the Wetlands and Other Waters section.

#### **State Requirements: Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act**

California's Porter-Cologne Act, enacted in 1969, provides the legal basis for water quality regulation within California. This act requires a "Report of Waste Discharge" for any discharge of waste (liquid, solid, or gaseous) to land or surface waters that may impair beneficial uses for surface and/or groundwater of the state. It predates the CWA and regulates discharges to waters of the state. Waters of the state include more than just waters of the U.S., like groundwater and surface waters not considered waters of the U.S. Additionally, it prohibits discharges of "waste" as defined, and this definition is broader than the CWA definition of "pollutant." Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the CWA.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and RWQCBs are responsible for establishing the water quality standards (objectives and beneficial uses) required by the CWA and regulating discharges to ensure compliance with the water quality standards. Details about water quality standards in a project area are included in the applicable RWQCB Basin Plan. In California, RWQCBs designate beneficial uses for all water body segments in their jurisdictions and then set criteria necessary to protect those uses. As a result, the water quality standards developed for particular water segments are based on the designated use and vary depending on that use. In addition, the SWRCB identifies waters failing to meet standards for specific pollutants. These waters are then state-listed in accordance with CWA Section 303(d). If a state determines that

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<sup>17</sup> The U.S. EPA defines "effluent" as "wastewater, treated or untreated, that flows out of a treatment plant, sewer, or industrial outfall."

waters are impaired for one or more constituents and the standards cannot be met through point source or non-point source controls (NPDES permits or WDRs), the CWA requires the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). TMDLs specify allowable pollutant loads from all sources (point, non-point, and natural) for a given watershed.

### **State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards**

The SWRCB administers water rights, sets water pollution control policy, and issues water board orders on matters of statewide application, and oversees water quality functions throughout the state by approving Basin Plans, TMDLs, and NPDES permits. RWCQB's are responsible for protecting beneficial uses of water resources within their regional jurisdiction using planning, permitting, and enforcement authorities to meet this responsibility.

### **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program**

#### **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)**

Section 402(p) of the CWA requires the issuance of NPDES permits for five categories of storm water discharges, including Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). An MS4 is defined as "any conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, human-made channels, and storm drains) owned or operated by a state, city, town, county, or other public body having jurisdiction over storm water, that is designed or used for collecting or conveying storm water." The SWRCB has identified Caltrans as an owner/operator of an MS4 under federal regulations. Caltrans' MS4 permit covers all Department rights-of-way, properties, facilities, and activities in the state. The SWRCB or the RWQCB issues NPDES permits for five years, and permit requirements remain active until a new permit has been adopted.

The Caltrans' MS4 Permit, Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ (adopted on September 19, 2012 and effective on July 1, 2013), as amended by Order No. 2014-0006-EXEC (effective January 17, 2014), Order No. 2014-0077-DWQ (effective May 20, 2014) and Order No. 2015-0036-EXEC (conformed and effective April 7, 2015) has three basic requirements:

1. Caltrans must comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit (see below);
2. Caltrans must implement a year-round program in all parts of the State to effectively control storm water and non-storm water discharges; and
3. Caltrans storm water discharges must meet water quality standards through implementation of permanent and temporary (construction) Best Management Practices (BMPs), to the maximum extent practicable, and other measures as the SWRCB determines to be necessary to meet the water quality standards.

To comply with the permit, Caltrans developed the Statewide Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) to address storm water pollution controls related to highway planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities throughout California. The SWMP assigns

responsibilities within Caltrans for implementing storm water management procedures and practices as well as training, public education and participation, monitoring and research, program evaluation, and reporting activities. The SWMP describes the minimum procedures and practices Caltrans uses to reduce pollutants in storm water and non-storm water discharges. It outlines procedures and responsibilities for protecting water quality, including the selection and implementation of BMPs. The proposed project will be programmed to follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in the latest SWMP to address storm water runoff.

### **Construction General Permit**

Construction General Permit, Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ (adopted on September 2, 2009 and effective on July 1, 2010), as amended by Order No. 2010-0014-DWQ (effective February 14, 2011) and Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ (effective on July 17, 2012). The permit regulates storm water discharges from construction sites that result in a Disturbed Soil Area (DSA) of one acre or greater, and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. By law, all storm water discharges associated with construction activity where clearing, grading, and excavation result in soil disturbance of at least one acre must comply with the provisions of the General Construction Permit. Construction activity that results in soil disturbances of less than one acre is subject to this Construction General Permit if there is potential for significant water quality impairment resulting from the activity as determined by the RWQCB. Operators of regulated construction sites are required to develop Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs); to implement sediment, erosion, and pollution prevention control measures; and to obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit.

The Construction General Permit separates projects into Risk Levels 1, 2, or 3. Risk levels are determined during the planning/design phases and are based on potential erosion and transport to receiving waters. Requirements apply according to the Risk Level determined. For example, a Risk Level 3 (highest risk) project would require compulsory storm water runoff pH and turbidity monitoring, and before construction and after construction aquatic biological assessments during specified seasonal windows. For all projects subject to the permit, applicants are required to develop and implement an effective SWPPP. In accordance with Caltrans' SWMP and Standard Specifications, a Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) is necessary for projects with DSA less than one acre.

### **Section 401 Permitting**

Under Section 401 of the CWA, any project requiring a federal license or permit that may result in a discharge to a water of the U.S. must obtain a 401 Certification, which certifies that the project will be in compliance with state water quality standards. The most common federal permits triggering 401 Certification are CWA Section 404 permits issued by the USACE. The 401 permit certifications are obtained from the appropriate RWQCB, dependent on the project location, and are required before the USACE issues a 404 permit.

In some cases, the RWQCB may have specific concerns with discharges associated with a project. As a result, the RWQCB may issue a set of requirements known as WDRs under the State Water Code (Porter-Cologne Act) that define activities, such as the inclusion of specific features, effluent limitations, monitoring, and plan submittals that are to be implemented for protecting

or benefiting water quality. WDRs can be issued to address both permanent and temporary discharges of a project.

### *Affected Environment*

The following information in the subsequent sections are derived from the Stormwater Data Reported completed in September 2020 (Caltrans, 2020). Water quality and best management practices are further discussed in Section 2.3.2 and Section 2.3.5.

#### **Ventura River Watershed** (Figure 14)

The proposed project is located within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and within the Ventura River Watershed.<sup>18</sup> The Ventura River Watershed covers approximately 223 square miles of space, with less than half within the Los Padres National Forest.<sup>19</sup> The Ventura River discharges into the Pacific Ocean and serves as a natural western boundary for the City of Ventura.

Major tributaries to the Ventura River include Matilija Creek, North Fork Matilija Creek, Coyote Creek, Senior Canyon, Reeves, Thacher Creeks, Lion Canyon, San Antonio Creek, and Cañada Larga. The overall average measured rainfall for the entire watershed is approximately 20 inches per year. Over 90 percent of the rainfall is measured between the months of November and April for any given year. Constant erosion rates produce a large volume of sediment supplied to the Ventura River from upper-elevation tributary streams. Sediment production in the area is also heavily impacted by the occurrence of increasingly frequent forest fires that burn and clear the dense vegetation on slopes and flatter areas within the watershed. All of that debris increases the erodibility and grinding of the creek bottoms and natural stream channels.<sup>20</sup>

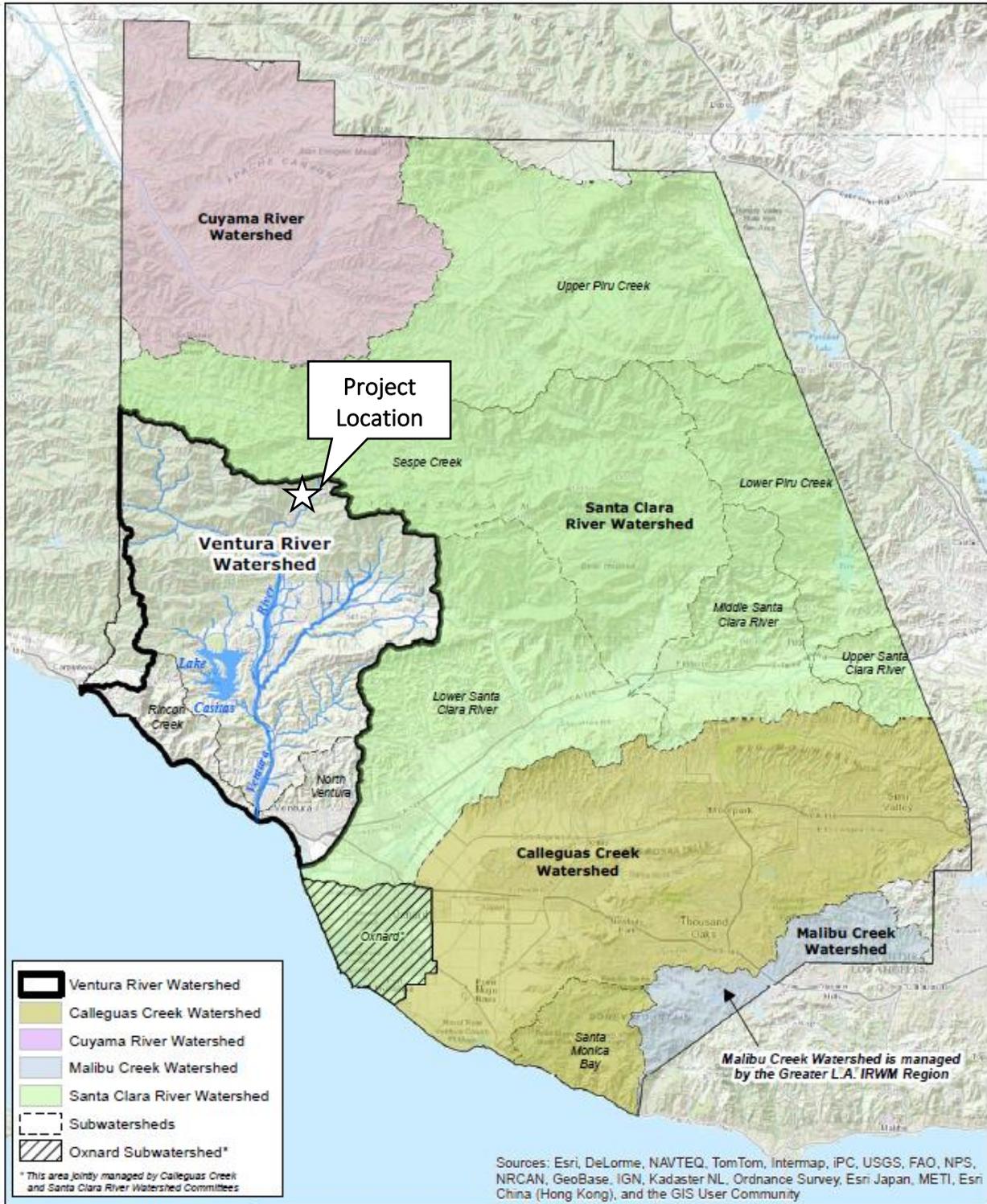
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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterboards\\_map.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterboards_map.html)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.vcpbpublicworks.org/wpd/ventura-river/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.vcpbpublicworks.org/wpd/ventura-river/>

Figure 14. Ventura River Watershed <sup>21</sup>



Ventura County  
Resource Management Agency  
Information Systems Department  
Map created on 05/02/2014



## Ventura River Watershed

Disclaimer: this map was created by the Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Mapping Services - GIS, which is designed and operated solely for the convenience of the County and related public agencies. The County does not warrant the accuracy of this map and no decision involving a risk of economic loss or physical injury should be made in reliance thereon.

## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

There will be no changes to the existing alignment as a result of the No-Build Alternative. Therefore, no impacts to water quality resources are anticipated as a result of the No-Build Alternative.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

Construction of Build Alternatives 1 and 2 will result in a replacement of 0.211 acres of impervious surface area and a net increase in approximately 0.0477 acres of impervious surface area as a result of the roadway widening. The total disturbed soil area (DSA) is estimated to be 0.278 acres.

The Build Alternatives would be designed to anticipate runoff levels and would include storm water treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize potential impacts, in accordance with Caltrans' Statewide NPDES Storm Water Permit. Since the total DSA of the project is less than one acre, a Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) will be enforced to control, prevent, remove, or reduce pollution and minimize potential impacts of stormwater discharges during construction. In addition, a temporary timber platform will be placed on top of the creek to prevent construction debris from entering the creek. Further discussion of this platform is described in Section 2.3.5. A temporary scaffold will also be constructed from the roadway to allow work near the retaining wall without entering the creek. No construction equipment will need access to the creek. Therefore, the anticipated water quality impacts during construction will be minimal and cause no adverse short-term or long-term impacts.

Standard project measures will include the following commitments:

**WQ-1:** A Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) will be prepared for the project to minimize construction debris and discharge into the waterways.

**WQ-2:** All permit conditions laid forth in the NPDES General Permit for Discharges and the 401 Permit will be implemented.

Compliance with the NPDES General Permit for Discharges from Construction Activities will minimize impacts to water quality for both Build Alternatives 1 and 2.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The Build Alternatives will be designed in accordance with Caltrans' Statewide NPDES Storm Water Permit and related stormwater requirements, which would minimize the potential for cumulative water quality impacts. All water quality impacts are construction-related and will cease after project construction. Permanent water quality impacts are not anticipated for the

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<sup>21</sup> <http://wcvc.ventura.org/maps/maps.htm>

project, and therefore, contributions to cumulative impacts are not considerable in the long term.

*Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

With the standard project measures listed above for the project, there will be no adverse impacts to water quality and stormwater runoff. Therefore, no additional avoidance and minimization measures are required.

## 2.2.2 Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography

### *Regulatory Setting*

For geologic and topographic features, the key federal law is the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which establishes a national registry of natural landmarks and protects “outstanding examples of major geological features.” Topographic and geologic features are also protected under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This section also discusses geology, soils, and seismic concerns as they relate to public safety and project design. Earthquakes are prime considerations in the design and retrofit of structures. Structures are designed using Caltrans’s Seismic Design Criteria (SDC). The SDC provides the minimum seismic requirements for highway bridges designed in California. A bridge’s category and classification will determine its seismic performance level and which methods are used for estimating the seismic demands and structural capabilities. For more information, please see the [Department’s Division of Engineering Services, Office of Earthquake Engineering, Seismic Design Criteria](#).

### *Affected Environment*

The geological and geotechnical conditions and subsequent conclusions presented in this section are based on the Geotechnical Design Report (Caltrans, 2019).

### **Geologic Setting**

This project lies within the Pine and the Topatopa Mountains of the Transverse Range Geomorphic Province. Regionally, this area is characterized by east-west trending mountain ranges and valleys which transect the otherwise north-westerly oriented geologic structure of most of California. Locally, the existing slope is comprised of marine strata from Upper Cretaceous (dark gray, micaceous clay Shale with minor interbeds of tan Arkosic Sandstone). The North Fork Matilija Creek stream channel deposits consist of fluvial sands, gravels, cobbles, and boulders, underlain by moderately hard marine sedimentary bedrock (shale). The bedding in the shale is well defined in outcrops and is inclined at a steep dip (near vertical) to the north to overturned.

### **Topography**

The spring and slope of the project area is located north of the third tunnel on State Route (SR) 33, approximately 9 miles north of Ojai, in Ventura County. The general terrain in the area consists of hills and valleys. The slope of the project dips steeper than 80 degrees towards northeast and the slope facing the roadway dips about 70 degree to northwest between the tunnel and the spring. The slope is mainly unvegetated to about 35 feet above the road level. At the spring location, the upper portion of the slope consists mainly of shrubs and trees. Tree roots observed at the rock joints and bedding planes could cause rockfall and slope instability in the future. Gravel and cobble-sized rock fragments were also observed at the toe of the slope during a site visit.

**Subsurface Conditions**

Based on the information obtained from three exploratory boreholes drilled at the southbound of SR 33 along the tunnel approach area in 2019, the depth to sedimentary bedrock (Shale) is between 5 to 20 feet. It seems that the road is mainly built on fill around the creek bend and on bedrock farther to the south. The fill is mainly comprised of gravel, silt/clay and sand. Top few feet of the bedrock is moderately to very intensely fractured.

**Groundwater**

Water was observed in the stream during the visit to the project site. The groundwater level in boring RC-19-001 and RC-19-002 was measured about 15 feet below the ground surface (Table 9).

**Table 9. Measured Groundwater Table**

Boring Hole Number	Ground Surface Elevation (ft)	Groundwater Table or Piezometric Elevation	
		Depth (ft)	Elevation (ft)
RC-19-001	1766	15	1751
RC-19-002	1763	15	1748

**Corrosivity**

Four soil samples taken from Boring No. RC-19-001, RC-19-002, and RC-19-003 were tested by Fugro Laboratory for corrosion testing. Based on the results, the site is considered corrosive to foundation elements (Table 10).

**Table 10. Corrosion Test Results**

Boring Hole Number	Sample Depth (ft)	pH	Minimum Resistivity (Ohm-Cm)	Sulfate Content (PPM)	Chloride Content (PPM)
RC-19-001	1-10	7.72	1523	-	-
RC-19-002	5-10	8.39	512	2452	33
	15-20	8.44	815	1006	44
RC-19-003	1-3	8.27	3122	-	-

*Note: The Caltrans Corrosion Guidelines states that if the minimum resistivity is greater than 1100 ohms centimeter (Ohm-Cm) the sample is considered to be non-corrosive and testing to determine sulfate and chloride is not performed. Caltrans currently considers a site to be corrosive to foundation elements if one or more of the following conditions exist: Chloride concentration is greater than or equal to 500 ppm, sulfate concentration is greater than or equal to 1500 parts per million (ppm), or the pH is 5.5 or less.*

*Ohms-Cm is a measurement of the volume resistivity of a semi-conductive material. Ppm refers to the number of units of mass per million units of total mass. pH is a measure of the acidity or base of an aqueous solution.*

### Seismicity

The project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone as established by the California Geological Survey. It is 0.14 miles away from the closest fault zone, the Santa Ynez zone (Pacific section). The project site may be subject to strong ground motions from nearby earthquake sources during the design life of the proposed retaining wall.

Based on the recent field investigations and the Standard Penetration Test correlations, the average shear wave velocity for the upper 100 feet (VS30) of soil is estimated to be 997 ft/sec (304m/sec).

### Liquefaction

The Design Spectrum was determined using the Caltrans ARS Online (v. 2.3.09) web tool. The Design Spectrum is the upper envelope of deterministic and probabilistic response spectrums. For this site, the Design Spectrum is controlled by the probabilistic approach. The probabilistic ARS curve corresponds to a ground motion return period of 975 year (5% probability to be exceeded in 50 years). Using the USGS Interactive Deaggregation Tool, the controlling probabilistic fault scenario for this site was determined. Ground motion parameters are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11. Ground Motion Parameters**

Magnitude	Site to Fault Distance (miles)	V <sub>s30</sub> (ft/sec)	Peak Ground Acceleration (PGA)
7.11	3.45	997	0.67g

It was determined that the thin layer (1.5 in. thick) of sandy silt at elevation +1748 feet is liquefiable, and therefore liquefaction potential exists in the project site.

### *Environmental Consequences*

#### No-Build Alternative

There would be no modifications to the existing highway in the No-Build Alternative. No ground disturbance would occur. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to geology, soils, seismicity, and topography under this alternative.

#### Build Alternative

The environmental consequences for the Build Alternative are as follows:

**Ground shaking** – Although the structure may be subject to strong ground motions from nearby earthquake sources, the potential for structural damage would be substantially reduced or avoided through compliance with applicable building and seismic codes to be consistent per Caltrans Standard Specifications and per the recommendations of the geotechnical report to reduce any potential impacts.

**Liquefaction** – Although there is a potential for the project to be subjected to liquefaction after construction, the widening of the roadway will be designed and constructed to be consistent per Caltrans Standard Specifications and per the recommendations of the geotechnical report to reduce any potential impacts.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Based on the Build Alternatives, there will be minimal impacts to geological resources. There are no anticipated cumulative impacts from the proposed project in conjunction with past, present, and future projects.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

**GEO-1:** A drainage system at the bottom of the slope is recommended to collect water and divert it from the roadway to the existing creek.

### 2.2.3 Paleontology

#### *Regulatory Setting*

Paleontology is a natural science focused on the study of ancient animal and plant life as it is preserved in the geologic record as fossils.

23 United States Code (USC) 1.9(a) requires that the use of Federal-aid funds must be in conformity with all federal and state laws.

Under California law, paleontological resources are protected by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

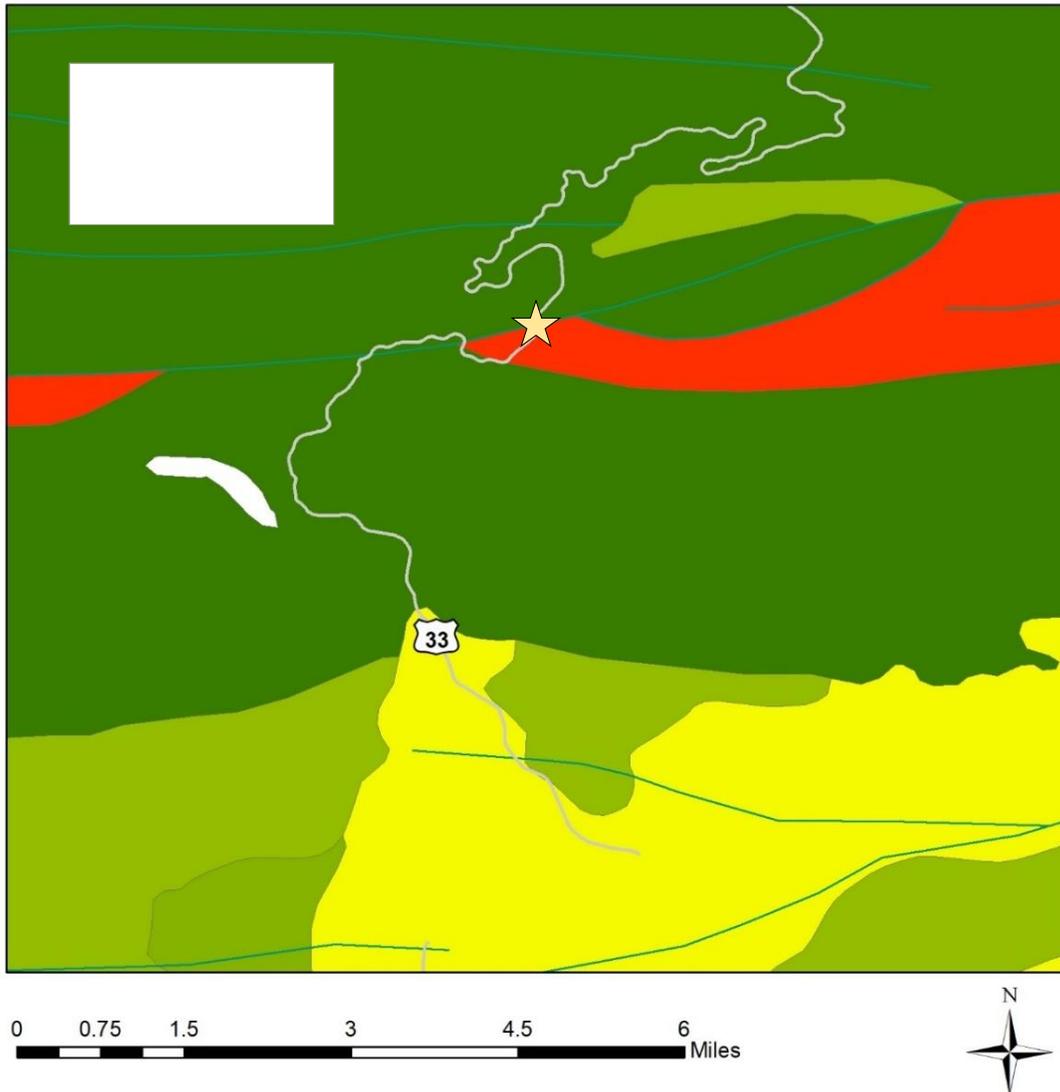
#### *Affected Environment*

Geological formations in which the proposed projects are located determine whether paleontological resources are potentially present and their relative importance.<sup>22</sup> Based on the information gathered from United States Geological Surveys (USGS), the geological formations in the project area is primarily composed of upper cretaceous marine rocks (Figure 15). After acquiring the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) shapefile for paleontological resources from Ventura County Resource Management Agency (VCRMA), it was determined that the sensitivity of the resources in the area was undetermined (Figure 16).

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<sup>22</sup> [https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/ceqa/current\\_ISAG.pdf](https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/ceqa/current_ISAG.pdf)

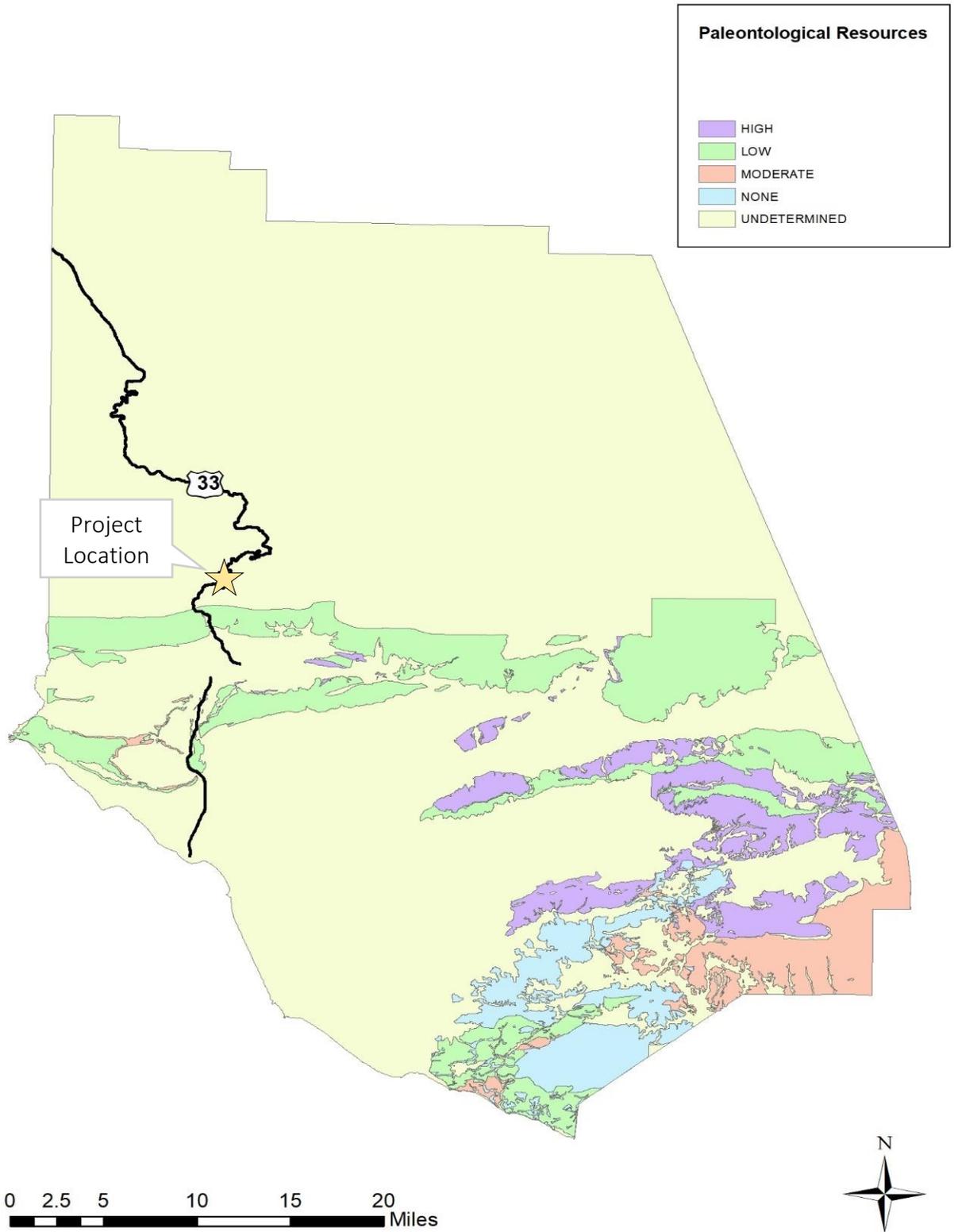
Figure 15. Geological Formations Near Project Location



### Geological Rock Formation Types

-  Eocene marine rocks
-  Older Quaternary alluvium and marine deposits
-  Oligocene nonmarine rocks, unit 2 (Central and Southern California)
-  Quaternary alluvium and marine deposits
-  Upper Cretaceous marine rocks, unit 1 (Upper Great Valley Sequence)

Figure 16. Paleontological Resource Sensitivities of Ventura County



## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative will leave the road in its current existing condition without any modifications. Therefore, no paleontological resources will be impacted by the No-Build Alternative.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

The proposed project will extend the roadway overhang by approximately 3 feet and 1 foot, respectively. It will be accomplished by demolishing existing asphalt concrete and reconstructing existing pavement to allow for widening. There will be no drilling, excavating, or grading involved that will disturb original ground surfaces. Because construction will be limited to only previously disturbed areas, it is anticipated that there are no impacts to paleontological resources for the both build alternatives.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

There are no impacts to paleontological resources as a result of this project. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of this project.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

There are no anticipated impacts to paleontological resources for the Build Alternatives. Therefore, no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigations are necessary for the Build Alternatives.

## 2.2.4 Hazardous Waste/Materials

### *Regulatory Setting*

Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste, and also the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use.

The primary federal laws regulating hazardous wastes/materials are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. The purpose of CERCLA, often referred to as “Superfund,” is to identify and cleanup abandoned contaminated sites so that public health and welfare are not compromised. The RCRA provides for “cradle to grave” regulation of hazardous waste generated by operating entities. Other federal laws include:

- Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act (CERFA) of 1992
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Atomic Energy Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)

In addition to the acts listed above, Executive Order (EO) 12088, *Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards*, mandates that necessary actions be taken to prevent and control environmental pollution when federal activities or federal facilities are involved.

California regulates hazardous materials, waste, and substances under the authority of the CA Health and Safety Code and is also authorized by the federal government to implement RCRA in the state. California law also addresses specific handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning of hazardous waste. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act also restricts disposal of wastes and requires cleanup of wastes that are below hazardous waste concentrations but could impact ground and surface water quality. California regulations that address waste management and prevention and cleanup of contamination include Title 22 Division 4.5 Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste, Title 23 Waters, and Title 27 Environmental Protection.

Worker and public health and safety are key issues when addressing hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper management and disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

## *Affected Environment*

The Hazardous Waste Assessment (HWA) was completed on June 5, 2020, by the Caltrans Hazardous Waste Branch. The assessment generally consists of a project evaluation, a departmental record review, regulatory agency records review, and a general field visit. The following information mentioned here on forth is derived from the assessment.

### Hazardous Waste Record Search

A search for hazardous waste and petroleum product release sites was conducted through the California State Water Resource Control Board, Geotracker database. The database identified one site approximately 500 feet west of the project limits. An inspector reported that an area of approximately 50 square feet was stained and emitted odors of diesel fuel. However, the topography is such that the release would not flow on the project limits.

### Aerially Deposited Lead in Soil

The project will excavate approximately one foot of unpaved soil for the concrete-lined drainage interceptor ditch area in the northbound direction on the outside shoulder. There is potential for soil contaminated with aerially deposited lead (ADL) based on results from soil samples collected at post-mile 15.67 by APEX Environmental Recovery Inc. in 1994. The results showed concentrations ranging from 17 particles per million (ppm) to 55 ppm. Historical use of leaded gasoline resulted in exhaust emissions to be deposited in unpaved soil immediately adjacent to roadways typically within the top two to five feet.

### Yellow and White Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking

The existing yellow traffic stripe and pavement marking will be impacted during construction. Yellow thermoplastic stripe and pavement marking contain elevated concentrations of lead and chromium that exceed hazardous waste thresholds established by Title 22 regulations. White traffic stripes will also be removed in conjunction with construction staging. Residue from removal of white traffic stripe is considered non-hazardous waste but typically contains low level of lead.

### Treated Wood Waste

Removal of wood posts from the Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) and roadside sign will generate treated wood waste (TWW). Wood posts were treated with chemical preservatives that contain arsenic, chromium, cooper, cresol, and pentachlorophenol to protect it from insect damage and fungal decay.

### Asbestos Containing Material

Asbestos containing material (ACM) is a hazardous waste concern for structures that will undergo demolition or renovation as asbestos that may exist in the concrete of the structure and appurtenances may become airborne. Asbestos shims may have been placed between the wood post and the metal rail of the MBGR.

## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative will leave the existing alignment of the roadway as it currently stands. Therefore, no impacts from hazardous wastes are anticipated from the No-Build Alternative.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

There is potential to encounter hazardous waste/materials during construction.

#### Hazardous Waste Record Search

Based on the results of the hazardous waste and petroleum product release sites record search, there are no sources of hazardous waste contamination in the nearby area that could impact the project site location.

#### Aerially Deposited Lead

Aerially deposited lead (ADL) from the historical use of leaded gasoline exists in unpaved soils along roadways through California. There is a likely presence of soils with elevated concentrations of lead because of ADL. Soil determined to contain lead concentrations exceeding stipulated thresholds must be managed under the July 1, 2016, ADL Agreement between Caltrans and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. This ADL Agreement allows such soils to be safely reused within the project limits as long as all requirements of the ADL Agreement are met. The project will excavate approximately one foot of soil for construction of the concrete-lined interceptor ditch. The soil in the project area will be disturbed during construction, which may cause workers' exposure to the contaminant.

The following standardized measure will be included to reduce potential impacts of ADL:

**HAZ-1:** ADL contaminated soils must be managed under the ADL Soil Management Agreement between Caltrans and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control that took effect on July 1, 2016. A site investigation of ADL will be conducted during the design phase. Based on the soil test results, the Office of Environmental Engineering (OEE) will provide the soil classifications and engineering special provisions for the management of excavated soil. The contractor will be required to prepare a Lead Compliance Plan and Work Plan for the management, transport, and disposal of ADL soil, and the removal of yellow and white stripe and pavement marking.

#### Yellow and White Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking

Construction of the project will impact existing yellow and white stripes pavement marking. Residue produced from yellow stripe removal is classified as non-RCRA (California) Hazardous Waste and must be properly collected, stored, tested before being transported and disposed of in accordance to State and Federal regulations. Residue from white traffic stripe removal is considered non-hazardous waste but containing low level of lead, which will not require special management or disposal.

With the standard project measure listed below, potential impacts from yellow and white traffic stripe/pavement marking will be minimized, as much as feasible:

**HAZ-2:** The OEE will provide engineering special provisions for the removal of yellow and white traffic stripe. The Contractor will be required to prepare a Lead Compliance Plan and a Work Plan for the management of yellow and white traffic stripes removal, which will be removed and approved by the OEE. Residue produced from the removal of the yellow thermoplastic stripe and pavement marking are considered non-RCRA (California) Hazardous Waste and must be properly collected, stored, tested, transported, and disposed of in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

#### Treated Wood Waste

Treated wood waste is anticipated for the removal of wood posts from the Metal Beam Guard Rail (MBGR) and roadside sign as a part of proposed project. All treated wood waste must be managed as hazardous waste and disposed at a facility permitted in California to accept treated wood waste in compliance with Title 22 California Code of Regulations. With the implementation of the measures mentioned in avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures below, the potential impacts of treated wood waste will be reduced, as much as feasible.

#### Asbestos Containing Material

During construction, asbestos containing material may be encountered during demolition of concrete structures. The dust and debris from the demolition may expose the workers and the general public to asbestos, a hazardous material. Asbestos shims may also be present in between the wood post and the metal railing of the MBGR, making the workers in touch of asbestos when performing the MBGR removal. The implementation of the measures mentioned in avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures below will minimize the potential impacts of ACM, as much as feasible.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project would not have permanent impacts to hazardous waste. Hazardous materials encountered during construction will be properly collected, stored, tested, transported, and disposed of in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Temporary construction impacts associated with the excavation and disposal of hazardous waste will cease once construction is complete. All described impacts in the proposed project, as well as the projects in the area, are limited to the project construction site and would be minimized, to the extent feasible, to reduce impacts relating to hazardous waste or materials. Therefore, the proposed project will not have cumulative hazardous waste impacts to humans or the physical environment.

#### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to the standard measures mentioned above, the following avoidance/minimization measures will be implemented to reduce impacts relating to hazardous waste, as much as feasible.

**HAZ-3:** A site investigation of aurally deposited lead (ADL) will be necessary during the design phase to obtain site specific soil data required for disposal of the excavated soil.

**HAZ-4:** All treated wood waste must be managed as hazardous waste and disposed of at a facility permitted in California to accept treated wood waste in compliance with Title 22 California Code of Regulations.

**HAZ-5:** An Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) survey must be implemented prior to the demolition or renovation of the structures to ensure protective measures are taken for human health and the environment. If asbestos is detected, the appropriate non-standard provisions will be provided to require the contractor to prepare an Asbestos Compliance Plan for the protection of workers and a Work Plan for special handling, protection of the creek, and proper disposal of the ACM. Notification to the local Air Pollution Control District is required at least 15 days prior to demolition or renovation of a structure whether it contains asbestos or not.

**HAZ-6:** An asbestos survey by a Certified Asbestos Consultant is required to determine if asbestos shims were present. Upon the completion of the ACM survey, if asbestos shims detected, OEE will provide the appropriate special provisions for the removal of the asbestos shims concerning special handling, containerization, labeling, transport, and disposal during the removal of MBGR

**HAZ-7:** Hazardous waste issues will be revisited during design phase as more details of the work will be developed.

## 2.3 Biological Environment

A Natural Environment Study (NES) for the project was completed on March 5, 2020 (Caltrans, 2020), and a NES Addendum was prepared on June 04, 2020 (Caltrans, 2020), following a change in project scope which reduced the widening from eight-feet to nine-feet to two-feet-nine-inches and four-feet-nine-inches as described in Section 1.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion. The following information in the subsequent sections are based on information gathered from the NES and NES Addendum. If additional studies were prepared for the project, it will be mentioned in the subsequent sections.

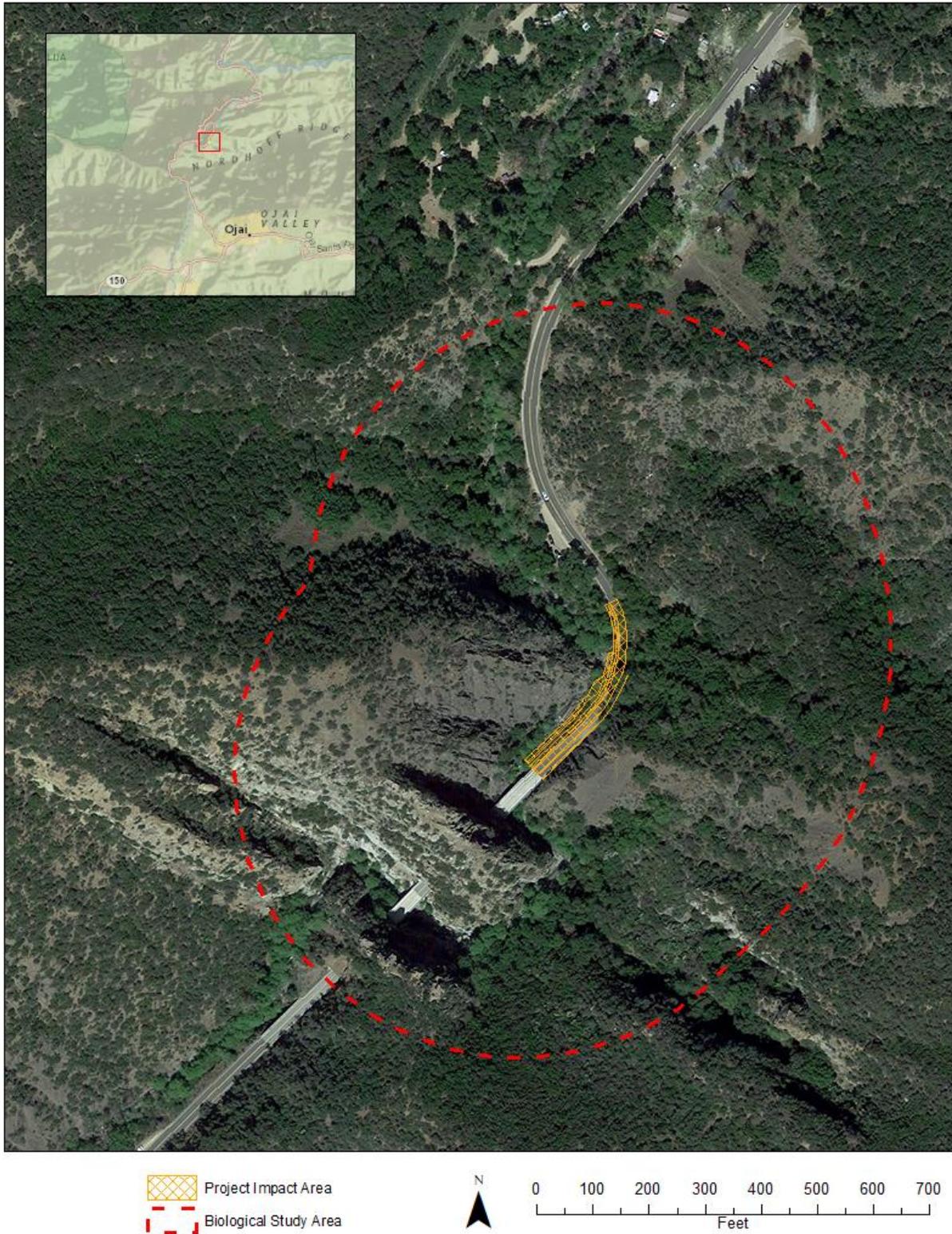
The biological study area (BSA) includes the project impact area and the surrounding landscape within 500 feet of the project impact area (Figure 17). Potential indirect impacts typically occur in the BSA, whereas potential direct impacts occur in the project impact area. A 500 feet buffer was chosen for the BSA because the steep topography and gorge walls in the area limited the potential spread of indirect impacts. Areas adjacent to the North Fork Matilija Creek were also included in the project impact area.

The field survey dates and the types of surveys taken for the respective project are listed in Table 12.

**Table 12. Field Survey and Dates**

Date	Type of Survey
October 4, 2018	General Field Survey and Habitat Assessment
March 29, 2019	Rare Plant Survey
April 16, 2019	California red-legged frog breeding season (day and night survey)
May 8, 2019	California red-legged frog breeding season (day and night survey)
May 30, 2019	California red-legged frog breeding season (night survey)
June 26, 2019	California red-legged frog breeding season (night survey)
July 18, 2019	California red-legged frog breeding season (night survey)
July 25, 2019	Drone survey
August 7, 2019	Southern steelhead trout snorkel survey
August 7, 2019	Acoustic night emergence and foraging bat survey

Figure 17. Biological Study Area and Project Impact Area



### 2.3.1 Natural Communities

This section of the document discusses natural communities of concern. The focus of this section is on biological communities, not individual plant or animal species. This section also includes information on wildlife corridors and habitat fragmentation. Wildlife corridors are areas of habitat used by wildlife for seasonal or daily migration. Habitat fragmentation involves the potential for dividing sensitive habitat and thereby lessening its biological value. Protection of the natural communities in the project area are governed by the California Fish and Game Code and the Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance.

Habitat areas that have been designated as critical habitat under the Federal Endangered Species Act are discussed below in the Threatened and Endangered Species Section 2.3.5. Wetlands and other waters are also discussed below in Section 2.3.2.

#### *Affected Environment*

The BSA is predominantly composed of white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) riparian woodland. The riparian woodlands are classified as special status natural communities by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Nearby habitat communities include the coastal sage scrub and chaparral natural communities. Plant species such as California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) are observed in these communities. The northern wall of Wheeler Gorge also includes species such as chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*) and chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*).

A vertical seep is also located within the BSA and is overgrown with maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) and moss. Vertical seeps do not have a natural community sensitivity ranking, but based on literature review and Caltrans assessment, they are considered rare biological resources.

North Fork Matilija Creek, located next to the retaining wall of the roadway (Figure 5 and Figure 7), is a freshwater stream with perennial but variable flow throughout the year. It has experienced long periods of drought and periods of abundant water. At its highest observed flows in winter 2018-2019, North Fork Matilija Creek spanned the gap between the vertical south-facing slope of the gorge and the rock block wall, 20 feet across, with a high flow rate. In the summer, the creek typically narrows down to its slower and much shallower low flow channel

The North Fork Matilija Creek is a habitat connectivity corridor as it provides a safe passage for terrestrial wildlife when it is not flowing at its bank-full width. Many drainages and swales are tributaries to North Fork Matilija Creek and it connects to a number of canyons in the area. The nearest existing fish passage barrier is located upstream at the Wheeler Gorge campsite. The second nearest fish passage barrier is downstream adjacent to the Mossler Quarry. At this location there is a large drop/waterfall, which resulted from boulders tumbling down into the stream from the quarry. There is a culvert for the unnamed tributary to North Fork Matilija Creek within the BSA. This culvert enables passage under the highway for small wildlife.

## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative will not change the existing alignment of the current roadway. The roadway will remain in its current state with no additional improvements. Run-off-road collisions will continue to impact the alder riparian woodland habitat as a result of the No-Build Alternative (Table 2).

### **Build Alternative 1**

*Permanent Impacts* (Table 13 and Table 14)

Build Alternative 1 will have permanent direct impacts to four trees (two (2) white alders and two (2) California bay trees) and 150 square feet (sq. ft.) alder riparian woodland to accommodate for the three feet overhang when widening the road. After construction, the overhang will provide an additional 90 sq. ft. of consistent permanent shade over the creek, which is preferable to local trout populations. These trees will be replaced on-site at locations more suitable for nesting using ratios described in Table 15.

*Temporary Impacts* (Table 13 and Table 14)

There will be temporary direct impacts to seven trees (one (1) white alder, two (2) Big-leaf maple, three (3) arroyo willows) and 1,550 sq. ft. of alder riparian woodland to enable construction access. Tree/vegetation removal and trimming will be required to enable construction access. Trees that are temporarily impacted will be replanted on-site in the existing locations at specified ratios (Table 15).

The following standard measures will reduce impacts to water quality during construction of the project:

**BIO-1:** Caltrans will implement its standard best management practices for stormwater pollution prevention.

### **Build Alternative 2**

*Permanent Impacts* (Table 13 and Table 14)

Permanent direct impacts of Build Alternative 2 are similar to Build Alternative 1 except two trees will be permanently removed (one (1) white alder and one (1) California Bay) instead of four trees. These trees will be replanted at the same location or nearby at ratios mentioned in Table 15.

*Temporary Impacts* (Table 13 and Table 14)

Build Alternative 2 will have temporary direct impacts to six trees (one (1) white alders, two (2) Big-leaf maples, and three (3) arroyo willows) and 900 sq. ft. of alder riparian woodland habitat due to both tree removal and trimming. Trees that are temporarily removed will be replanted with new trees at a specific ratio (Table 15) in the same location or at a location more suitable for nesting after project construction.

Table 13 shows the differences in trees being impacted for Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2. Table 14 compares the square footage of impacts in the natural communities between the two build alternatives and Table 15 specifies the replacement ratios for each type of tree species removed.

**Table 13. Permanent/Temporary Impacts to Whole Trees Based on Project Alternative**

Project Alternative	White alder		California bay		Big-leaf maple		Arroyo willow	
	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent	Temporary	Permanent
No-Build Alternative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Build Alternative 1	1	2	0	2	2	0	3	0
Build Alternative 2	1	1	0	1	2	0	3	0

*Note: Tree impacts in this table are for whole trees; impacts to trees due to trimming are included accounted for based on square footage.*

**Table 14. Natural Community Impacts Between Project Alternatives**

Project Alternative	White Alder Riparian Woodland			
	Temporary		Permanent	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
No-Build Alternative	0	0	0	0
Build Alternative 1	900	0	150	0
Build Alternative 2	1550	0	0	0

*Note: All impacts are in units of square feet.*

**Table 15. Riparian Tree Replacement Ratio**

Tree Species	Proposed Replacement Ratio
White alder	3:1 plants grown from broadcast seed
California bay laurel	5:1 5-gallon plants
Arroyo willow	3:1 cuttings
Big-leaf maple	5:1 5-gallon plants

Standard measures implemented for Build Alternative 1 will also be implemented for Build Alternative 2.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The project will not contribute to cumulative impacts to the alder riparian habitat because the majority of the trees that are permanently impacted are close to the roadway and are regularly maintained by Caltrans. Combined with past, present, and future projects, the proposed project will not result in adverse cumulative impacts to the alder riparian habitat.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to the **BIO-1** mentioned above, the following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce impacts to the riparian community:

**BIO-2:** Caltrans will mitigate the loss of riparian habitat by replanting species on-site on the hillside after construction and in the biological study area outside of the project impact area within North Fork Matilija Creek.

**BIO-3:** Caltrans will minimize the removal and trimming of riparian vegetation to the extent feasible. A certified arborist will be present to monitor tree trimming during all project activities. Trees that require catastrophic trimming will have their location, species, and physical conditions recorded, which will inform the restoration effort. Stumps will be left in place in the permanent impact area to maintain the integrity of the soil in which the trees are supporting and will have the opportunity to resprout in place.

**BIO-4** The project biologist will be present full-time during the project activities within or adjacent to the stream. The biologist will monitor the removal of vegetation and quantify impacts to inform the compensatory mitigation for this project. The biologist will monitor the project for the compliance of legal requirements and permit conditions and the implementation of the project's conservation measures.

**BIO-5:** Caltrans will avoid performing road demolition, ground disturbance, and activities in North Fork Matilija Creek during bank-full flow events.

**BIO-6:** A qualified biologist will present information to the construction staff, who are on the site for longer than 30 minutes. All construction staff will be required to receive the program. The program will inform the construction staff the species that are likely to occur in the project area, the project's conservation measures, and the procedures for preventing and triaging environmental impacts.

**BIO-7:** Caltrans will specify that North Fork Matilija Creek and riparian vegetation outside of the proposed project impact area is an environmentally sensitive area. The construction staff will be made aware of the work boundaries. Fencing or signage will be placed at the edge of the project impact area to remind construction staff of the limits of disturbance.

## 2.3.2 Wetlands and Other Waters

### *Regulatory Setting*

Wetlands and other waters are protected under a number of laws and regulations. At the federal level, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, more commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 USC 1344), is the primary law regulating wetlands and surface waters. One purpose of the CWA is to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands. Waters of the U.S. include navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce. The lateral limits of jurisdiction over non-tidal water bodies extend to the ordinary highwater mark (OHWM), in the absence of adjacent wetlands. When adjacent wetlands are present, CWA jurisdiction extends beyond the OHWM to the limits of the adjacent wetlands. To classify wetlands for the purposes of the CWA, a three-parameter approach is used that includes the presence of hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils (soils formed during saturation/inundation). All three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the CWA.

Section 404 of the CWA establishes a regulatory program that provides that discharge of dredged or fill material cannot be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation's waters would be significantly degraded. The Section 404 permit program is run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

The USACE issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities when they are similar in nature and cause minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of USACE's Individual permits. There are two types of Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the USACE decision to approve is based on compliance with U.S. EPA's Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 230), and whether permit approval is in the public interest. The Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines (Guidelines) were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the USACE, and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative which would have less adverse effects. The Guidelines state that the USACE may not issue a permit if there is a "least environmentally damaging practicable alternative" (LEDPA) to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S., and not have any other significant adverse environmental consequences. The Executive Order for the Protection of Wetlands (EO 11990) also regulates the activities of federal agencies with regard to wetlands. Essentially, EO 11990 states that a federal agency, such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and/or Caltrans, as assigned, cannot undertake or provide assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the

agency finds: (1) that there is no practicable alternative to the construction and (2) the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm. A Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding must be made.

At the state level, wetlands and waters are regulated primarily by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). In certain circumstances, the Coastal Commission (or Bay Conservation and Development Commission or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency) may also be involved. Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code require any agency that proposes a project that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of or substantially change the bed or bank of a river, stream, or lake to notify CDFW before beginning construction. If CDFW determines that the project may substantially and adversely affect fish or wildlife resources, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement will be required. CDFW jurisdictional limits are usually defined by the tops of the stream or lake banks, or the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider. Wetlands under jurisdiction of the USACE may or may not be included in the area covered by a Streambed Alteration Agreement obtained from the CDFW.

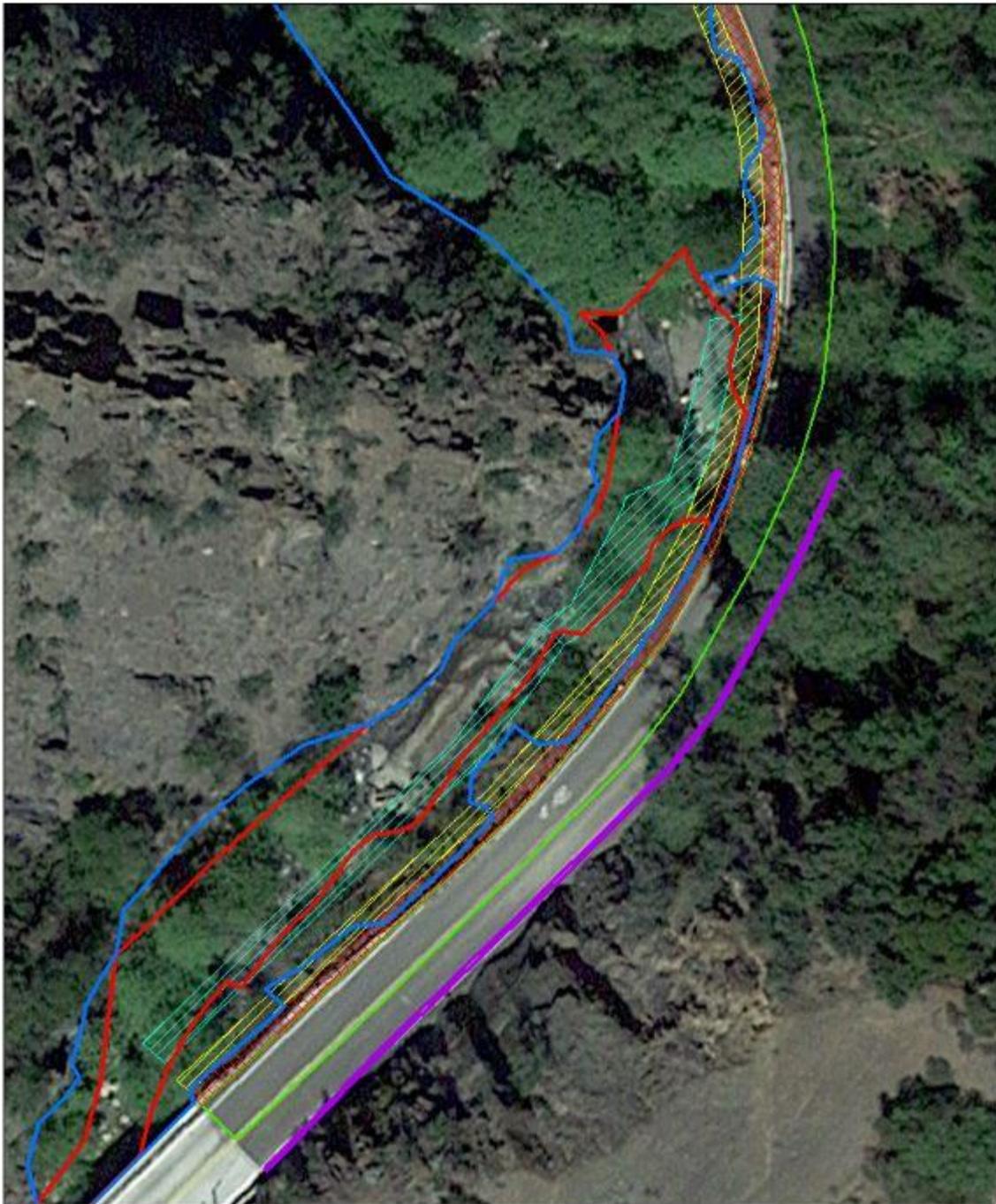
The RWQCBs were established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to oversee water quality. Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the CWA. In compliance with Section 401 of the CWA, the RWQCBs also issue water quality certifications for activities which may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request. Please see the Water Quality section for more details.

### *Affected Environment*

North Fork Matilija Creek, a freshwater stream with perennial and variable flow, is a tributary to the Ventura River and the Pacific Ocean, and thus, is considered a Waters of the U.S. It exists within the same limits as Waters of the State. North Fork Matilija Creek and its adjacent riparian vegetation is also regulated by Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code.

The project impact area consists of North Fork Matilija Creek, which is unvegetated and has a partially sandy bottom. Large rocks and boulders interrupt the flow of water and form small step pools throughout the creek. The project impact area includes the Waters of the U.S./Waters of the State and CDFW jurisdictional lands throughout most of the BSA. Although the project impact area includes jurisdictional waters, there are no jurisdictional wetlands that exhibit the three parameters used to classify wetlands under the CWA. Figure 18 depicts the jurisdictional areas of impact relative to the proposed project.

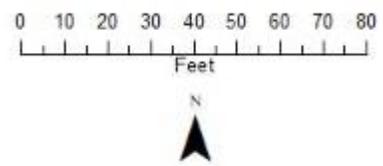
Figure 18. Jurisdictional Areas of Impact



**Legend**

CDFW Jurisdiction  
ACOE/RWQCB Jurisdiction

-  Road Replacement
-  Temporary Impacts
-  Permanent Impacts
-  Pedestrian



## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

There would be no improvements made under the No-Build Alternative. Therefore, there will be no impacts to wetlands and other waters under the No-Build Alternative.

### **Build Alternative 1**

#### *Permanent Impacts*

The proposed project will have 200 sq. ft. of permanent impacts to Waters of the State (RWQCB's jurisdiction) because surface water from the vertical seep that crosses over the road will be permanently rerouted. Instead of splashing onto the surface of the pavement and flowing across the road before entering the creek, the water will be diverted directly down to the North Fork Matilija Creek through the proposed concrete-lined drainage channel, down the side of the bridge and through the existing cross culvert (Figure 5). This will have beneficial permanent impacts on water quality as contaminants from the road will no longer be carried down to the creek. The proposed work will reduce slipperiness and enhance safety on the roadway.

#### *Temporary Impacts*

During construction, there will be approximately 240 sq. ft. of temporary direct impacts to Waters of the U.S. (USACE jurisdiction/RWQCB jurisdiction/CDFW jurisdiction) due to a temporary interruption of water flow from the vertical seep to the North Fork Matilija Creek Bridge to construct the concrete-lined drainage ditch. The water flow from the springwater will need to be temporarily diverted in order to construct the concrete-lined drainage ditch. In addition, it is anticipated that there will be approximately 1,550 sq. ft. of temporary direct impacts to CDFW jurisdiction due to the trimming of riparian vegetation growing over or next to the creek. All of these impacts are temporary and will cease after project construction. The temporary direct impacts will be minimized through the replanting of trees in more suitable habitats throughout the biological study area. The tree placement ratio for the project is shown in Table 15.

The following standard project measure is also included as a part of the project scope:

**BIO-1:** Caltrans will implement its standard best management practices for stormwater pollution prevention.

### **Build Alternative 2**

#### *Permanent Impacts*

The permanent impacts of Build Alternative 2 will be the same as Build Alternative 1 for the impacts to Waters of the State (RWQCB's jurisdiction) as both alternatives are rerouting surface water from the vertical seep to the northbound shoulder ditch. See discussion on Build Alternative 1.

#### *Temporary Impacts*

Similar to Build Alternative 1, Build Alternative 2 will also have 240 sq. ft. of temporary indirect impacts to Waters of the U.S. (USACE jurisdiction/RWQCB jurisdiction/CDFW jurisdiction) as the

construction work for the drainage ditch is the same. As a result of vegetation trimming and removal, 900 sq. ft. of temporary direct impacts to CDFW’s jurisdiction are anticipated for this alternative. The trees will be replanted at ratios specified in Table 15.

The total square footage of temporary/permanent and direct/indirect impacts to each of the jurisdictions are listed in Table 16.

**Table 16. Jurisdictional Waters Impacts by Project Alternative**

Project Alternative	Waters of the US				Waters of the State (RWQCB only)				CDFW Jurisdiction			
	Temporary		Permanent		Temporary		Permanent		Temporary		Permanent	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
No-Build Alternative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Build Alternative 1	240	0	0	0	240	0	0	200	1140	0	0	0
Build Alternative 2	240	0	0	0	240	0	0	200	1790	0	0	0

*Note: All numbers represented denote the area impacted in a measurement of square footage. Impacts to CDFW’s jurisdiction include both streamwater and the adjacent riparian vegetation.*

Standard measures proposed for Build Alternative 1 will also be implemented for Build Alternative 2.

**Cumulative Impacts**

There are no jurisdictional wetlands within the vicinity of the proposed project, and the proposed project will not substantially affect jurisdictional waters, or riparian resources. Therefore, combined with past, present, and future projects within the biological study area, there are no cumulative impacts anticipated for wetlands and other waters as a result of the proposed project.

*Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to **BIO-3**, **BIO-6**, and **BIO-7** mentioned in Natural Communities, the following measure is also proposed to minimize impacts from the proposed project:

**BIO-8:** Caltrans will minimize the direct impacts to jurisdictional waters, riparian resources, and the vertical seep, to the extent feasible.

### 2.3.3 Plant Species

#### *Regulatory Setting*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have regulatory responsibility for the protection of special-status plant species. “Special-status” species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. Special status is a general term for species that are provided varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and/or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Please see the Threatened and Endangered Species Section 2.3.5 in this document for detailed information about these species.

This section of the document discusses all other special-status plant species, including CDFW species of special concern, USFWS candidate species, and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare and endangered plants.

The regulatory requirements for FESA can be found at 16 United States Code (USC) Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 402. The regulatory requirements for CESA can be found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et seq. Department projects are also subject to the Native Plant Protection Act, found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 1900-1913, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), found at California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000-21177.

#### *Affected Environment*

The white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) and California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*) are the dominant plant species identified in the project impact area. Most of the species observed were common, such as the California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*). The northern wall of Wheeler Gorge inhabits species such as chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*) and chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*).

Table 17 summarizes the special-status plant species that are identified as potentially occurring in the BSA. All other special-status plant species listed as Threatened or Endangered are in Section 2.3.5.

**Table 17. Special-status Plant Species Potentially Occurring in the BSA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent, Species Observation	Potential for Occurrence
Late-flowered mariposa-lily	<i>Calochortus fimbriatus</i>	FSS, CNPS	Chaparral	Absent	No potential to occur. The chaparral in the BSA is not sufficiently open or exposed enough for this species. The botanical expert did not indicate that this species was present in the BSA.
Ojai fritillary	<i>Fritillaria ojaiensis</i>	FSS, CNPS	Mesic chaparral	Present	Potential to occur. This species has been observed above/uphill of the PIA.
Satintail	<i>Imperata brevifolia</i>	FSS, CNPS	Streambanks, meadows, seeps, springs	Habitat Present, Not Observed, Absent	No potential to occur. There is a spring within the BSA, outside of the project impact area. However, this species has not been observed during the rare plant survey in suitable habitat during the bloom period and the rare plant expert did not indicate that this species was present in the BSA.

Note: Absent – no habitat present and no further work is needed; Habitat Present – Habitat is, or may be, present; Not Observed – Species was not observed in suitable habitat during appropriately conducted surveys.

Status: Forest Service Sensitive (FSS); California Native Plant Society Ranked (CNPS) – Rankings under consideration in this report include 1 and 2

Based on rare plant surveys conducted for this project, expert knowledge, and consultation with U.S. Forest Service, special-status plant species that have the potential to occur include the Ojai fritillary (*Fritillaria ojaiensis*). Other special-status plant species listed in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) have no potential to occur and are not expected to be affected by project activities with reasons described in Table 17.

### **Ojai Fritillary**

The Ojai fritillary is a Forest Service sensitive species and a California Native Plant Society-ranked rare species. It prefers rocky slopes within chaparral and other similar habitats. The BSA provides suitable habitat for the species and it has been recorded that the species occur on the slope adjacent to the northbound lane of the project.

## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

Under the No-Build Alternative, there will be no improvements made to the existing facility. Therefore, no impacts to special-status plant species are anticipated for the No-Build Alternative.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

#### *Ojai Fritillary*

There will be no permanent or temporary direct impacts to the Ojai fritillary because project construction will not affect the slope where the species is located. Potential indirect impacts will be minimized through the avoidance and minimization measures that will prevent invasive species from entering the biological study area.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The proposed project will not have cumulative impacts to special-status plant species, and there are currently no planned projects in the present and future that would impact special-status plant species in the area. Therefore, cumulative impacts to plant species are not anticipated.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to **BIO-6** mentioned previously in above sections, the following avoidance and minimization measures will be conducted during construction to minimize impacts to the special-status plant species:

**BIO-9:** Project equipment that shall be used for ground disturbance or vegetation removal will be washed of invasive plant materials and vectors prior to entering the Los Padres National Forest and Biological Study Area.

**BIO-10:** The Ojai Fritillary will be protected during Educational Program, reminding workers that they must avoid impacts to the vertical seep, which could undercut the Fritillary population.

## 2.3.4 Animal Species

### *Regulatory Setting*

Many state and federal laws regulate impacts to wildlife. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) are responsible for implementing these laws. This section discusses potential impacts and permit requirements associated with animals not listed or proposed for listing under the federal or state Endangered Species Act. Species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered are discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species Section 2.3.5 below. All other special status animal species are discussed here, including CDFW fully protected species and species of special concern, and USFWS or NOAA Fisheries candidate species.

Federal laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
- State laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:
  - California Environmental Quality Act
  - Sections 1600 – 1603 of the California Fish and Game Code
  - Sections 4150 and 4152 of the California Fish and Game Code

### *Affected Environment*

Several common bird species are known to reside in the Biological Study Area (BSA) including the California scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) as well as the American dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*). Other common wildlife known to occur in the area are mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and others.

There are a total nine special-status wildlife species (not including birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and threatened/endangered species) potentially present in the BSA based on field surveys and preliminary literature.

Table 18 lists the special-status wildlife species potentially occurring in the BSA. This list only includes special-status wildlife/bird species that are not state or federally listed as "Threatened" or "Endangered". For further discussion on State or Federally-listed Threatened or Endangered Species, please see Section 2.3.5.

**Table 18. Special-status Animal Species Potentially Occurring in the BSA**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent, Species Observation	Potential to Occur
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	FSS	Various habitats, nests on the shore of lakes	A	No potential to occur. There are no lakes in the project area and no modeled habitat in the BSA.
Arroyo chub	<i>Gila orcutti</i>	SSC	Warm, low gradient, freshwater streams with sandy substrates	HP, NO	Potential to occur. North Fork Matilija Creek features suitable habitat for this species.
Foothill yellow-legged frog	<i>Rana boylei</i>	SCT, FSS	Rocky streams	HP, NO, A	No potential to occur. Suitable habitat is present for this species in the BSA. No life stages of this species were observed during appropriately conducted amphibian surveys. There are no recent records of this species in the North Fork Matilija Creek watershed.
Southwestern pacific pond turtle	<i>Actinemys marmorata pallida</i>	FSS, SSC	Streams with stones or logs	HP, NO	Potential to occur. Suitable habitat is present for this species in the project impact area. No life stages of this species were observed during surveys, but dedicated surveys were not performed for this species.
Two-striped garter snake	<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i>	FSS, SSC	Streams, ponds, and riparian areas with cover	HP, NO	Potential to occur. Same as "Southwestern pacific pond turtle."
Pallid bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	FSS, SSC	Abandoned structures and bridges	HP, P	Potential to occur. The bridge in the BSA is suitable habitat for this species. This species was identified during the bat survey.
Western yellow bat	<i>Lasiurus xanthinus</i>	SSC	Riparian trees	HP, P	Potential to occur. There are riparian trees in the project impact area and this species was observed during the bat survey.
Long ear myotis	<i>Myotis evotis</i>	FSS	Trees, bark strips, cliffs	HP, P	Potential to occur. The riparian vegetation in the BSA is suitable roosting habitat for this species and it was observed during the bat survey.
Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	FSS, SSC	Bridges, old trees in woodlands and forests	HP, NO	Potential to occur. The bridge west of the project work area features suitable. This species was not identified in the bat survey.

Note: Absent (A) - no habitat present and no further work needed. Habitat Present (HP) -habitat is, or may be, present. The species may be present. Present (P) – species was observed directly or indirectly in BSA. Assumed Present (P) – Species is assumed to be present. Not Observed (NO) – Species was not observed in suitable habitat during appropriately conducted surveys. Critical Habitat (CH) – Critical habitat has been designated for this species in the BSA.

Status: Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Forest Service

Sensitive (FSS); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); State Candidate Threatened (SCT) State Species of Special Concern (SSC);

Seven special-status animal species that have the potential to occur or could be affected by project activities within the BSA include arroyo chub (*Gila orcutti*), southwestern pacific pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), long ear myotis (*Myotis evotis*), and Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*). Other special-status animal species have no potential to occur in the project impact area and are not expected to be affected by project activities with reasons described in Table 18.

### **Arroyo chub**

The arroyo chub (*Gila orcutti*) is a CDFW state species of concern. It is usually found in warm, low gradient, freshwater streams with sandy substrates. Based on previous literature written prior to the 2017 Thomas Fire, numerous accounts of arroyo chub have been observed in North Fork Matilja Creek. CNDBB records of this species indicate that the closest occurrence of this species is within Sespe Creek and downstream in the Ventura River watershed. It has been determined that the species may have been temporarily extirpated from the BSA due to the Thomas Fire in 2017. Arroyo chub was not observed in the BSA during biological surveys.

### **Southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake**

The southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*) and two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*) are both designated as Forest Service sensitive species and CDFW state species of concern. Suitable habitat is present for this species near the creek within the BSA. The southwestern pond turtle prefers streams with logs and stones, while the two-striped garter snake prefers streams, ponds, and riparian areas with shade. Despite the ideal conditions presented in the potential habitat, both of these species were not observed during surveys. It has been determined that these species may have been negatively affected by the Thomas Fire and thus, locally extirpated from the BSA. Their presence will not be discounted due to their recent occurrences in Wheeler Gorge according to literary findings.

### **Bats**

There are four special-status bat species that have the potential to occur in the BSA—the pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), long ear myotis (*Myotis evotis*), and the Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*). The pallid bat and the Townsend's big-eared bat are both Forest Service sensitive species and designated as CDFW special species of concern. The pallid bat prefers roosting in abandoned structures and bridges, while the Townsend's big-eared bat prefers roosting in bridges, mature woodland and forest trees. The western yellow bat is a designated CDFW special species of concern and the long ear myotis is a Forest Service sensitive species. The western yellow bat prefers roosting in riparian trees, while the long ear myotis prefers roosting in trees, barks, strips, and cliffs. There is suitable habitat and potential for maternity colonies in the bridge and riparian trees (both special-status and common species bats). Maternity colonies are sensitive and are critical to the bat life-cycle. Two special-status bat species (the pallid bat and the long eared myotis) were observed in the BSA during the acoustic bat survey.

## **Birds**

The BSA features potentially suitable nesting habitat in the mature riparian trees and chaparral shrubs. The bridge to the west of the project limits also provides suitable nesting habitat for swallows. Bird nesting was not observed in the BSA, but migratory and resident bird species are present. Bird nesting may be limited in the BSA due to regular maintenance of trees and its proximity to the roadway, which makes it undesirable for bird nesting.

## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

There will be no impacts to animal species under the No-Build Alternative as no improvements will be made to the existing alignment.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

#### *Arroyo Chub*

The project may have temporary indirect impacts to the arroyo chub as the BSA features suitable habitat for the species. However, the species was not observed in the BSA during surveys and it is unlikely that the species will be present during construction. Measures to avoid and minimize the impacts to the arroyo chub will be similar to the steelhead trout as they both live in the same aquatic environment. Please see Section 2.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species for the measures to avoid and minimize impacts to this species.

#### *Southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake*

There will be no temporary or permanent direct impacts to either species. Prior to construction, surveys will be conducted to determine presence of these species. Should any individuals be found, they will be relocated outside of the project impact area by a qualified biologist approved by CDFW. There may be permanent impacts to the habitat due to the removal of vegetation. Trees will be replaced based on a ratio described in Table 15 and thus, the anticipated impacts to the southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake will be minimal.

#### *Bats*

There will be no temporary direct impacts to the maternity colony under the bridge because no project activities are anticipated on top of, or under the bridge. However, there may be temporary indirect impacts to bat colonies due to construction-related light, noise, and vibration. The project will implement measures to minimize the effects of construct-related lights and vibration. Surveys will also be conducted before tree removal to ensure impacts to tree-roosting colonies are avoided. During construction, a bat biologist will be present to ensure impacts to all bat maternity colonies are minimized, to the extent feasible. There will be no permanent impacts to bats once project construction is completed.

## *Birds*

There will be no temporary direct impacts to migratory bird nesting since suitable nesting habitats are not available in project impact area. Because there are an abundance of other nesting areas for resident chaparral birds in the area, there are minimal impacts anticipated from the removal of vegetation. The trees removed will be replaced at a ratio described in Table 15. The tree replacements are anticipated to provide better nesting habitats than the existing trees next to the roadway that will be removed. However, there may be temporary indirect impacts to migratory breeding birds due to construction-related noise. Bird-nesting surveys will be performed pre-construction to avoid and minimize disturbance to nesting birds in the BSA. There will be no permanent impacts to migratory birds as a result of the build alternatives.

The following standard measure will be implemented to avoid impacts to nesting birds during construction:

**BIO-10:** A biologist will perform nesting bird surveys no earlier than three days before initiation of vegetation removal, if it is scheduled during the nesting bird season. If nesting birds are observed within vegetation to be removed or habitat to be disturbed, then the project will avoid removing that vegetation until the nestlings have fledged. If there is a pause or lapse in construction for longer than three days, then a biologist will have to perform a repeat nesting bird survey prior to further vegetation removal during the nesting bird season.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

Because of the Thomas Fire in 2017, the project will have minimal impacts to sensitive species such as the southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake as they have not recovered in the region yet. Impacts to bats and birds will be avoided and/or minimized through implementation of the appropriate measures mentioned below. Therefore, the project will not contribute to the cumulative effects of these species.

## *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to **BIO-2**, **BIO-6** and the standard measure for nesting birds (**BIO-11**), the following avoidance and minimization measures will be conducted to minimize impacts to special-status animal species during construction:

**BIO-12:** A qualified ornithologist will monitor the project during vegetation removal, roadway demolition and other noise generating activities. The monitor will survey nesting birds in the BSA (if any have been identified during surveys or monitoring), and detect whether they are being disturbed by project activities. If the monitor observes nesting disturbance caused by the project then construction will have to be paused within 150 feet of the project activities until the nestlings have fledged.

**BIO-13:** Caltrans will schedule road demolition within 150 feet of the bridge during the night. A qualified bat project monitor will watch the bats while road demolition occurs. By scheduling this activity during the night, the project will reduce the effects of noise and vibration on the bats,

because any bats that would flee the roost at night would do so at a time when they are less vulnerable to predators, such as hawks.

**BIO-14:** A qualified bat biologist will monitor construction activities performed within 150 feet of the bridge and watch to see whether the bats are stressed by project activities. When the bats are observed to be stressed, the monitor will interrupt activities and the project will have to pause work within the area near the bat colony until Caltrans has conducted consultation with CDFW. If the monitor finds a dead bat in the BSA, then the monitor will inform the Caltrans biologist who will inform CDFW and if necessary, consultation will be re-initiated.

**BIO-15:** Caltrans will use the minimum lighting feasible to perform night work. The bat biologist will monitor the positioning and use of lighting to ensure that light is not unnecessarily shone upon the bridge and the riparian vegetation adjacent to the bat colony.

**BIO-16:** Caltrans will perform pre-construction surveys for tree roosting bats in riparian trees prior to their removal. If the trees are found to have tree roosting bats, then those trees will be removed during the night when bats are no longer present.

**BIO-17:** Caltrans will remove and trim riparian trees in a staged fashion during the bat maternity season evidenced by pre-tree-removal surveys. First limbs of the trees will be removed, and the remainder of the tree will be left in place over night. Leaving the tree overnight allows tree roosting bats to leave tree cavities. After the bats have left the trunk of the tree, the trunk will be removed and tree removal will be complete.

**BIO-18:** Caltrans will implement pre-construction surveys for southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake prior to disturbing land or vegetation within or adjacent to suitable habitat for these species.

**BIO-19:** A qualified herpetologist will monitor the project for the presence of the turtle and garter snake throughout project activities taking place within or above suitable habitat for these species. The biologist will monitor the status of exclusion measures and other conservation measures to prevent the project from affecting individuals directly.

**BIO-20:** Caltrans will mitigate the disturbance of the North Fork Matilija Creek streambanks by removing all temporary fills and recontouring the hillside after construction.

## 2.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species

### *Regulatory Setting*

The primary federal law protecting threatened and endangered species is the FESA: 16 United States Code (USC) Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402. This act and later amendments provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Under Section 7 of this act, federal agencies, such as the FHWA (and Caltrans, as assigned), are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as geographic locations critical to the existence of a threatened or endangered species. The outcome of consultation under Section 7 may include a Biological Opinion with an Incidental Take Statement or a Letter of Concurrence. Section 3 of FESA defines take as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect or any attempt at such conduct."

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), California Fish and Game Code Section 2050, et seq. CESA emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is the agency responsible for implementing CESA. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species determined to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." CESA allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects; for these actions an incidental take permit is issued by CDFW. For species listed under both FESA and CESA requiring a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of FESA, the CDFW may also authorize impacts to CESA species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Another federal law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, was established to conserve and manage fishery resources found off the coast, as well as anadromous species and Continental Shelf fishery resources of the United States, by exercising (A) sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing all fish within the exclusive economic zone established by Presidential Proclamation 5030, dated March 10, 1983, and (B) exclusive fishery management authority beyond the exclusive economic zone over such anadromous species, Continental Shelf fishery resources, and fishery resources in special areas.

### *Affected Environment*

A Biological Assessment (BA) for steelhead trout was submitted to National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) for Section 7 consultation. A BA Addendum was written after the project scope was updated to a four-foot-nine-inch widening/two-foot-nine-inch widening from an eight-foot

to nine-foot widening (Caltrans, 2020). The consultation process is further summarized in Chapter 4 – Comments and Coordination. An updated species list for both USFWS and NMFS are attached to Appendix F – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Species List and Appendix G – National Marine Fisheries Services Species List, respectively.

Based on the CNDDDB occurrences and Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) records, potential exists for 11 state and/or threatened, endangered or candidate species to occur within the BSA (Table 19).

**Table 19. Federal and State-listed Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent, Species Observation	Critical Habitat Present?	Potential for Occurrence
Spreading navarretia	<i>Navarretia fossalis</i>	FT	Vernal pools & ephemeral wetted areas	A	N	No potential to occur. There are no vernal pools or areas where they could occur in the BSA, and the wet areas in the BSA are perennially wet or don't have the topography to enable gradual evaporation.
California Orcutt grass	<i>Orcuttia californica</i>	FE, SE, CNPS	Vernal pools	A	N	No potential to occur. There are no vernal pools or areas where vernal pools could occur in the BSA.
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	FE, SE	Dense & multilayered willow riparian scrub woodland	A	N	No potential to occur. The riparian vegetation is generally single layered and not dense enough for this species.
California condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	FE	Nesting habitat includes cliffs and caves	HP, NO, A	N	No potential to occur. To the north of the project site there are cliffs 50 horizontal feet away from the project work area. However, this species is under recovery and its current range is outside of the BSA. There is no suitable breeding habitat in the project impact area.
Least Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	FE, SE	Dense Shrubby willow/mulefat riparian scrub	A	N	No potential to occur. The riparian vegetation is not sufficiently dense for this species.
Southern steelhead trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	FE	Low-gradient Streams	HP, (P), CH	Y	Potential to occur. NFMC is suitable for this species and there are recent records of its

Arroyo toad	<i>Anaxyrus californicus</i>	FE	Low-gradient streams in riparian woodlands with sandy bottoms & stable terraces	A	N	occurrence in adjacent reaches of NFMC. No potential to occur. NFMC does not have sandy banks in the BSA and the nearest records of arroyo toad are in a separate watershed.
California red legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	FT, SSC	Streams & ephemeral wetted areas for breeding	HP, NO	N	No potential to occur. NFMC is to the north of the project work area. No life stages of this species were observed during appropriately conducted protocol surveys. There is suitable habitat for most life stages of this species in the PIA.
Riverside fairy shrimp	<i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i>	FE	Vernal pools	A	N	No potential to occur. There were no vernal pools or areas where vernal pools could occur in the BSA.
Vernal pool fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	FT	Vernal Pools	A	N	No potential to occur. Same as above.

Note: Absent (A) – No habitat present and no further work needed. Habitat Present (HP) - Habitat is, or may be, present. The species may be present. Present (P) – Species was observed directly or indirectly in BSA. Assumed Present (P) – Species is assumed to be present. Not Observed (NO) – Species was not observed in suitable habitat during appropriately conducted surveys.

Status: Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act Protected (BGEPA); Forest Service Sensitive (FSS); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); State Candidate Threatened (SCT) State Species of Special Concern (SSC); California Native Plant Society Ranked (CNPS) – Rankings under consideration in this report include 1 and 2

Based on preliminary research, survey efforts, agency consultation, and historical documentation based on CNDDDB occurrences, it has been determined that one federally-listed threatened/endangered species and one critical habitat have the potential to occur in the project impact area and be impacted by project activities—the southern steelhead trout and its critical habitat. Other federally or state-listed threatened and endangered species from the CNDDDB list have no potential to occur within the project impact area and are not expected to be affected by project activities with reasons described in Table 19.

### **Steelhead trout**

Steelhead trout is listed as Endangered within the Southern California Evolutionary Significant Unit from Santa Maria River in San Luis Obispo County south to the southern extent of their range. Steelhead trout prefers to hatch in gravel-bottomed, fast-flowing, well-oxygenated rivers and streams. The anadromous fish is born in fresh water, where they typically spend one to three years before migrating to the ocean. After spending one to four years in the ocean, they return to their natal stream to spawn. Steelhead migration season typically occurs from November through March. Spawning takes place December through June, with peak activity

occurring in February and March. Caltrans performed a trout snorkel survey during the summer of 2019. No trout was observed in the BSA during the survey.

### *Environmental Consequences*

#### **No-Build Alternative**

There will be no impacts to threatened or endangered species and their critical habitat under the No-Build Alternative as existing conditions will remain the same.

#### **Build Alternative 1**

Section 7 consultation with NMFS regarding the updated scope started on August 27, 2020. It is anticipated that the project “May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect” the steelhead trout and “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect” its critical habitat. The other species listed in Table 19 have no potential to occur and will not be affected by project activities; therefore, a “No Effect” finding is applicable for all other species in the project impact area (Table 20).

Table 20. Federal and State-listed Species and their Effect Findings

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Effect Finding	Effect Finding for Critical Habitat
<b>Plants</b>				
Spreading navarretia	<i>Navarretia fossalis</i>	FT	No Effect	N/A
California Orcutt grass	<i>Orcuttia californica</i>	FE, SE	No Effect	N/A
<b>Birds</b>				
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	FE, SE	No Effect	N/A
California condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	FE	No Effect	N/A
Least Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	FE, SE	No Effect	N/A
<b>Amphibians and Reptiles</b>				
Arroyo toad	<i>Anaxyrus californicus</i>	FE	No Effect	N/A
California Red-Legged Frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	FT	No Effect	N/A
<b>Invertebrates</b>				
Riverside fairy shrimp	<i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i>	FE	No Effect	N/A
Vernal pool fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	FT	No Effect	N/A
<b>Fish</b>				
Steelhead trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	FE	May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect	May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect

Note: Status: Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act Protected (BGEPA); Forest Service Sensitive (FSS); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); State Candidate Threatened (SCT) State Species of Special Concern (SSC); California Native Plant Society Ranked (CNPS) – Rankings under consideration in this report include 1 and 2; N/A indicates that critical habitat is not present for this species and thus, not applicable.

*Steelhead trout*

**Permanent impacts**

The project will have permanent indirect impacts to the steelhead trout due to the alteration of habitat to enable space for the roadway widening. Approximately 150 sq. ft. of the alder riparian woodland will be permanently removed to accommodate for the increase in roadway width. The permanently removed trees will be replanted on-site at a different location nearby. Please see Section Natural Communities for details on the numbers, species, and ratios of trees impacted. The proposed cantilevered road as a part of the road widening will provide an addition of 90 sq. ft. of consistent shade over the creek, which will have beneficial permanent indirect impacts to the species. In addition, there will be a minor permanent indirect benefit to trout habitat quality due to the project increasing safety and reducing the occurrence of run-off-road accidents, which disturb vegetation and introduce pollutants into North Fork Matilija Creek.

### **Temporary impacts**

Temporary indirect impacts to the steelhead trout will include the trimming and removal of approximately 185 linear feet and 1,550 square feet of riparian vegetation to enable construction access. These impacts are temporary because the roadway widening will not preclude the regrowth of riparian vegetation in the project area. There will also be minor temporary indirect impacts to the steelhead trout due to the project's proximity to the creek. Temporary impacts to water quality will be minimized by construction best management practices. This includes a five to ten-foot wide temporary wooden platform (one-foot elevation) that will be placed on top of the bedrock and boulders in the creek to prevent materials and debris from entering the creek. Temporary direct impacts to steelhead trout may occur when placing the platform over the creek. This will be minimized through constructing during summer low-flow period and implementing a fish capture and relocation plan. Other measures that will avoid temporary direct impacts to steelhead trout include building a temporary scaffold along the rock block wall and limiting construction to the roadway. The temporary scaffold will be constructed on the roadway to allow workers to access the barrier without entering the creek. No construction equipment will need to access the creek under this alternative. Biological monitors will be present at all times during construction to ensure the impacts to the steelhead trout are minimized, as much as feasible.

The following standard measure will be incorporated to minimize water quality impacts during construction:

**BIO-1:** Caltrans will implement its standard best management practices for stormwater pollution prevention.

### **Build Alternative 2**

#### *Steelhead trout and Critical Habitat*

### **Permanent impacts**

There will be no permanent indirect impacts to the steelhead trout as a result of Build Alternative 2 because the impacts derived from the permanent removal of two trees are minor and negligible compared to the total area of the habitat. These trees will be replanted on-site at a location nearby at varying ratios specified in Table 15. The road widening will provide an addition of 10 sq. ft. of consistent shade over the creek, which will have beneficial permanent indirect impacts to the species. There will also be a minor permanent indirect benefit to trout habitat quality due to the anticipated reduction in vehicle collisions as described in Build Alternative 1.

### **Temporary impacts**

The temporary indirect impacts to the southern steelhead trout for the Build Alternative 2 are the same as Build Alternative 1, except that Build Alternative 2 will require the trimming and removal of 900 sq. ft. of riparian vegetation in the white alder riparian woodland, as opposed to the trimming and removal of the 1,550 sq. ft. of vegetation required for Build Alternative 1. These impacts are temporary and the riparian vegetation is expected to regrow over time. Temporary indirect impacts to water quality and measures used to minimize water quality degradation will be the same as Build Alternative 1. Temporary direct impacts to steelhead trout

will also be the same as Build Alternative 1 and will be minimized using the same construction practices and measures mentioned in Build Alternative 1. Please see discussion on impacts ifor Build Alternative 1 for further information.

Construction of the roadway will be similar to Build Alternative 1. No construction equipment will be required in the creek. All work will be done on the roadway, with the exception of placing temporary platforms over the creek for best management practices. Standard measures proposed for Build Alternative 1 will also be implemented for Build Alternative 2.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

The proposed project will have minor impacts to the southern steelhead trout and its habitat and thus, will not contribute to cumulative impacts to this species and its critical habitat. With the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, any impacts would be avoided or substantially minimized.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to **BIO-2** to **BIO-6** mentioned in previous sections, the following measures will also be implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to protected threatened and endangered species:

**BIO-21:** Caltrans will not perform work in the creek during steelhead migration season, November 1 to May 31.

**BIO-22:** Caltrans will install a containment system on the temporary scaffold and will have light equipment staged on the roadway, such as vacuums and spill kits, ready to contain and remove spills from the project area.

**BIO-23:** Prior to the beginning of construction, a qualified ichthyologist will survey the creek next to the project impact area and the reaches of the creek upstream and downstream of the project impact area. The biologist will implement the fish capture and relocation plan, which would exclude fish from the project area temporarily and relocate them to suitable habitat in North Fork Matilija Creek nearby. If more fish are present in the project area than originally anticipated or more fish mortalities occur than have been authorized by NMFS during the implementation of the plan, then Caltrans will pause the capture fish and relocation and re-initiate consultation with NMFS. If arroyo chub are found in the creek, then Caltrans will initiate consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Cut tree trunks will also be carefully placed in the North Fork Matilija Creek to provide refugia for steelhead trout and replicate natural turnover of riparian vegetation in the creek.

**BIO-24:** The qualified ichthyologist will be present during project activities in the creek to observe and record the project's compliance with conservation measures and observe whether southern steelhead or other special-status species have entered the project impact area after exclusion has been performed. The monitor will have the authority to pause construction in the creek if trout is encountered during construction. Caltrans will re-initiate consultation with

National Marine Fisheries Service if the monitor observes that the project is trending towards exceeding the authorized take amount.

**BIO-25:** The project biologist and resident engineer will meet prior to the beginning of construction to review the project's disturbance area and coordinate means to minimize the disturbance of the existing environment and minimize vegetation trimming to the extent feasible.

**BIO-26:** If any boulders are shifted by the project, they shall be re-oriented to their pre-project position, to keep trout refugia. Disturbance to the creek banks above the water level will be recontoured and stabilized to prevent future erosion. Professional photos of the work area will be taken prior to construction to ensure all objects are re-oriented back to the pre-project positions.

## 2.3.6 Invasive Species

### *Regulatory Setting*

On February 3, 1999, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” FHWA guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of the State’s invasive species list, maintained by the California Invasive Species Council to define the invasive species that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for a proposed project.

### *Affected Environment*

During site field visits, an assortment of invasive plant species were observed in the BSA including, but not limited to: Black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), Scotchbroom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Invasive plantain (*Plantago major*), and Smilo grass (*Stipa miliacea*).

### *Environmental Consequences*

#### **No-Build Alternative**

Under the No-Build Alternative, there will be no introduction of invasive species because no improvements will occur to the existing alignment and the current conditions will remain the same.

#### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

In compliance with the Executive Order on Invasive Species, EO 13112, and guidance from the FHWA, the proposed project will not contribute to a spread of invasive species through the use of invasive species for landscaping and erosion control. There is no use of invasive species proposed in the revegetation plans and the project will ensure that all equipment will be washed off of invasive vectors before entering the project site to prevent the introduction of invasive plants into the BSA.

#### **Cumulative Impacts**

With the implementation of the proposed avoidance and minimization measures, there will be no impacts to the BSA from the spread of invasive species. Therefore, no cumulative impacts from invasive species are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures*

In addition to **BIO-5** mentioned in the previous sections, **BIO-8** will be implemented to minimize potential impacts from invasive species:

**BIO-8:** Project equipment that shall be used for ground disturbance or vegetation removal will be washed of invasive plant materials and vectors prior to entering the Los Padres National Forest and Biological Study Area.

## Chapter 3 – California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Evaluation

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### Determining Significance under CEQA

The proposed project is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 United States Code Section 327 (23 USC 327) and the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 23, 2016, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans is the lead agency under CEQA and NEPA.

One of the primary differences between NEPA and CEQA is the way significance is determined. Under NEPA, significance is used to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or a lower level of documentation, will be required. NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) *as a whole* has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The determination of significance is based on context and intensity. Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under NEPA. Under NEPA, once a decision is made regarding the need for an EIS, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated and no judgment of its individual significance is deemed important for the text. NEPA does not require that a determination of significant impacts be stated in the environmental documents.

CEQA, on the other hand, does require Caltrans to identify each "significant effect on the environment" resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource, then an EIR must be prepared. Each and every significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the EIR and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines list a number of "mandatory findings of significance," which also require the preparation of an EIR. There are no types of actions under NEPA that parallel the findings of mandatory significance of CEQA. This chapter discusses the effects of this project and CEQA significance.

### 3.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project, and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices (BMPs) and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below; see Chapters 1 and 2 for a detailed discussion of these features. The annotations to this checklist are summaries of information contained in Chapter 2 in order to provide the reader with the rationale for significance determinations; for a more detailed discussion of the nature and extent of impacts, please see Chapter 2. This checklist incorporates by reference the information contained in Chapters 1 and 2.

**AESTHETICS**

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics**

**No Impact**

a, d) Build Alternatives 1 and 2 will not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista or create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. The project scope does not include the addition of light. The project will include temporary construction night lighting.

**Less Than Significant Impact**

b, c) The Build Alternatives will not substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway, and will not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. SR 33 is a designated California Scenic Highway. Caltrans licensed Landscape Architect has determined that the project will have negligible or very minor visual changes to the scenic route based on the results of the Visual Impact Assessment (Caltrans, 2020).

The project consists of constructing a stamped concrete barrier that will mimic the color and texture of natural rock in the existing environment and is consistent the San Jacinto Reyes Corridor Management Plan.

The tubular handrailing will also be installed on top of the concrete barrier to enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and will be painted an earth tone color and treated to look aged and non-reflective to match the natural environment.

The proposed project proposes to replace 10 trees (Build Alternative 1) and 8 trees (Build Alternative 2). Four species of trees are being removed as a part of the Build Alternatives: white alder, California bay laurel, big-leaf-maple, and arroyo willow. Please see Table 14 for more information on how many of each tree is being removed. The trees are primarily located next to the roadway and obstruct the view of the road for the driver. Unless off-site mitigation is required by CDFW, these trees will be replanted at a 3:1 seed, 5:1 5-gallon, 3:1 cuttings, and 5:1 5-gallon plants ratio in accordance the CDFW 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement Permit on-site. Please refer to Table 15 for further information.

Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for this section include: V-1 to V-5 and BIO-20 which are both found in Appendix C – Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary.

## AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.</p>				
Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

##### No Impact

a, b, c, d, e) There are no farmland and/or agricultural resources within the project area. Therefore, the project will not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance to non-agricultural use and does not conflict with zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. The project does not result in the loss of forestland or conversion of forest land to non-forest use and does not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No new

right-of-way is needed as part of the project; the completed project will be within Caltrans right-of-way.

The project does not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use

## AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.				
Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

##### No Impact

a, b, c) The Build Alternatives will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any applicable air quality plan as it is not expected to increase air quality pollutants permanently. The proposed project is a safety enhancement project and does not increase roadway capacity. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the project will cause a considerable net increase in any criteria air pollutants. In addition, the proposed project will not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations as temporary pollutants will be limited to primarily the project work site.

##### Less than Significant Impact

d) Construction of the Build Alternatives may result in temporary objectionable odors related to operation of diesel-powered equipment and off-gas emissions during road-building activities. These emissions would generally be limited to the project site and will cease once project construction completes. The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) limits the amount of Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions from all construction operations. Caltrans will comply with all VCAPCD and regional air quality guidelines in addition to all standard best management practices for air quality control including, but not limited to: performing work 500 feet away from sensitive receptors, minimizing idling of construction equipment, and implementing dust control measures. With the incorporation of the minimization measures, the project will have a less than significant impact on air quality.

## BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

#### No Impact

e, f) The proposed project does not conflict with Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance, which is the local ordinance protecting biological resources in the project area<sup>23</sup>. The proposed project will apply for Ministerial Tree Permit from Venntura County Resource Management Agency and will comply with guidelines set forth in the ordinance. In addition, the project will

<sup>23</sup> [https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/code/Tree\\_Protection\\_Ordinance.pdf](https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/code/Tree_Protection_Ordinance.pdf)

not conflict with the Oak Woodlands Management Plan, which is an adopted habitat conservation plan for the area. There will be no oak woodland habitats in the project vicinity, and therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

### **Less than Significant Impact**

a, c, d) There will be less than significant direct and indirect impacts to species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special status in local/regional ordinances or as established by CDFW, USFWS, or NMFS. There are no special-status plant species or special-status animal species that will be directly impacted by project activities as they were not observed in the project site. Indirect impacts to special-status plant species will be minimized through measures described in Section 2.3.3 Plant Species. Measures to avoid potential indirect impacts to special-status animal species are described in 2.3.4 Animal Species. Direct and indirect impacts to birds and bats species during construction will be avoided/minimized through measures mentioned in 2.3.4 Animal Species. There is one federally-listed threatened or endangered species that have the potential to occur during construction—the steelhead trout. Potential indirect impacts to the steelhead trout are caused by the alteration of habitat due to the trimming and removal of riparian vegetation and proximity of the creek to project activities. Trees that are removed will be replanted at a ratio described in Table 15 at nearby locations that will provide similar or better habitats. Water quality best management practices will be implemented to avoid water quality degradation. All work will be done on the roadway and no construction equipment will access the creek. Direct impacts to steelhead trout may occur when placing the timber platform over the creek to prevent debris from affecting water quality. This will be minimized through a fish capture and relocation plan. A biologist will also be on site to monitor construction activities. A consultation letter with findings of “May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect” for the steelhead trout and “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect” for its critical habitat has been sent to NMFS for review and concurrence. The proposed project will have no substantial adverse effect the species. Please see Section 2.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species for more information.

There will also be no substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands as there are no state or federally protected wetlands in the project area.

The project will not interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. The project will have less than significant impacts to migratory fish due to the fish capture and relocation plan implemented to avoid more substantial impacts to the steelhead trout during construction. After project construction, the migratory fish will resume its original course and no permanent impacts are anticipated from the project.

### **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**

b) The proposed project will have less than significant impacts to riparian communities or other sensitive communities with the incorporation of mitigation measures. Without the mitigation measures, impacts to the natural community will be significant. Build Alternative 1 will remove a total ten trees, which will be replanted at varying ratios explained Section 2.3.1 Natural

Communities. Build Alternative 2 will remove a total of eight trees, which will be replanted at varying ratios also shown in Table 15. Riparian Tree Replacement Ratio. These trees will be replanted in locations more suitable for bird nesting as the current locations are next to the roadway and are regularly trimmed by Caltrans maintenance. Through the replacement of trees, there will be less than significant impacts to the riparian community. On-going consultation with CDFW, NMFS, and USFWS will continue during design to ensure that all avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are included to reduce significant impacts to the riparian habitat.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

a, c, d) There will be no impact to historical resources because there are no historical resources in the project vicinity. The SR 33 was evaluated for the inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), however, it was determined negligible for listing due to the lack of architectural/historical significance and loss of physical integrity. The proposed work will be constructed within previously disturbed soil. There will be no excavation or drilling outside of previously disturbed soils. Thus, there is low potential for encountering intact buried deposits.

As with all Caltrans projects, standard measures for discovery of cultural materials will be implemented during construction. Please see Section 2.1.6 Cultural Resources for standard measures proposed for the project.

**ENERGY**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

b) The proposed project is a safety enhancement project that will not increase capacity of the road and therefore, it does not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

**Less Than Significant Impact**

a) During construction, there will be a less than significant impact to energy consumption due to the operation of large construction vehicles and equipment. This is temporary and will cease once construction ends. Please refer to Climate Change Chapter on the measures proposed to minimize and reduce energy consumption.

## GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

##### No Impacts

b, d, e, f) There are no impacts regarding soil erosion and loss of topsoil. The project is not located on expansive soil and/or soil incapable of supporting the use of septic tanks, and will not destroy a unique paleontological resource/site or unique geologic feature.

### **Less Than Significant Impact**

a-i, a-ii, a-iii, a-iv, c) The project is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone as established by the California Geological Survey. The project site is 0.14 miles, 4.71 miles, 9.9 miles away from the Santa Ynez (Pacific section), Mission Ridge-Arroyo Parida-Santa Ana, and Red Mountain fault, respectively. The structure may be affected by minor ground motions, liquefaction, and seismically induced settlement, which may occur where liquefaction potential exists. However, the potential impacts to structures would be reduced through current Caltrans design standards and construction best management practices, consistent with the recommendations provided by the geotechnical investigations prepared during the project's final design phase.

**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**Less Than Significant Impact**

a, b) While the proposed project may result in increase in GHG emissions during construction, project will not result in an increase in operational GHG emissions and would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases during operation. With implementation of construction GHG-reduction measures, the impact would be less than significant. Please refer to Climate Change Chapter for avoidance and minimization measures proposed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the project.

## HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

##### No Impact

c, d, e, g) The proposed project is not within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Therefore, there will be no impacts to schools within a quarter-mile of the construction zone. The site is not located on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and would not pose a significant hazard to the public and environment. The site is also not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport. As such, the proposed project will not have any direct safety hazard impacts to nearby schools, the public, or airport facilities. The project will not exacerbate wild land fires that may cause

significant risk of loss and injury to people and/or structures. In contrast, the project may decrease the rapid spread of wildfires. Please see Wildfire Section for more information.

### **Less Than Significant Impact**

a, b, f) The Build Alternatives will not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. It will not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

The disposal of construction material and waste is subject to the regulations of Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980 and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976 and California Health and Safety Code.

The proposed project will not routinely transport wastes and will cease any activities relating to hazardous waste concerns once project construction ends. Therefore, there are no permanent significant impacts relating to the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous waste materials. As a part of construction, there is a potential to encounter hazardous materials such as aerially deposited lead, lead-based paint, treated wood waste, and asbestos-containing materials as further described in Section 2.2.4 Hazardous Waste/Materials. These hazardous materials will be properly disposed of in the correct facilities as required by Caltrans Standard and Non-Standard Specifications and Procedures and avoidance and minimization measures. Possible impacts from hazardous materials of concern will be minimized to the extent feasible. As such, significant hazards to the public and the environment are reduced to minimal exposure. In addition, the proposed project will not interfere with adopted emergency plans within the project area. Coordination with local agencies will occur to reduce emergency response impacts as much as feasible. After construction, no impacts to emergency services will remain. A Transportation Management Plan will be prepared to address emergency services during the design phase. Please see Section 2.1.3 for further information on the measures proposed to reduce impacts to emergency services during construction.

## HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

##### No Impacts

a, b, c) The project will not violate any water quality standards, waste discharge requirements or substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. Construction will occur outside the creek and standard stormwater best management practices will be implemented throughout construction. The project will not decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge, and the project will not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, or the course of a stream or river. No work will occur within the stream or any nearby

water surfaces. A temporary timber platform will be constructed over the stream to catch construction debris and materials and will minimize impacts to water quality. Please see Section 2.3.5 for more information regarding the application of the timber platform.

c-i, c-ii, c-iii, c-iv) The project will not result in substantial erosion or siltation on or off-site. The standard Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) will be implemented to avoid substantial discharge into the waterways. The project will not substantially increase the rate of surface runoff or create/contribute runoff water as only 0.0477 acres of impervious surface area will be added as a result of the project. The project will not impede or redirect flood flows.

d, e) There will be no risk release of pollutants due to project inundation in a flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones as the project is not in any of these zones. The project will not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan and will follow all water quality guidelines set forth in the permit established by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

**LAND USE AND PLANNING**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impacts**

a, b) The Build Alternatives will not divide an established community or cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation. There are no residences within one mile of the proposed project. The project proposed is within an established roadway in the Los Padres National Forest. Caltrans will continue to coordinate with USFS to minimize the effects of the proposed project on any land use plan, policy, or regulation.

**MINERAL RESOURCES**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impacts**

a,b) The proposed project is not in an area that is protected by the Surface Mining Reclamation Act (SMRCA). The area is not subject to urban expansion and land use changes, and therefore, it remains unclassified by the California Geological Survey. The proposed project is a transportation safety project that will not alter land use, and therefore, will not result in the loss of known mineral resources or availability of a locally-important mineral resource. There is minimal excavation anticipated for the project, and therefore, no known mineral resources would be lost. There will be no impacts to mineral resources due to the nature of the proposed work, which is within previously disturbed areas and within the existing roadway.

**NOISE**

Would the project result in:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

b, c) The Build Alternatives will not generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels as construction does not include pile driving. The project is not located within 2 miles of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has been adopted.

**Less Than Significant Impact**

a) The Build Alternatives are not capacity increasing projects and thus, will not generate permanent noise impacts. Temporary construction-related noise impacts are regulated by Caltrans standard specifications, Section 14-8.02, Noise Control. These requirements state that noise levels generated during construction shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Therefore, construction impacts related to noise will be less than significant.

**POPULATION AND HOUSING**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

a, b) The project is not a capacity increasing project and therefore, the project would not induce local or regional growth in the area. Population growth will not occur as a result of Build Alternatives 1 and 2. In addition, the project does not require acquisition of right-of-way and therefore, it will not displace existing people or housing.

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

a) The project Build Alternatives would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for schools and parks, and/or government facilities.

**Less Than Significant Impact**

a) There will be less than significant impacts to response times for fire protection and/or police protection services. Coordination with local emergency and safety personnel will be conducted during construction to maintain acceptable response times. At least one lane will remain open for emergency access. A Traffic Management Plan will be implemented during construction to reduce impacts to emergency and safety protection. Please see Appendix C – Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary for further information.

**RECREATION**

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation**

**Build Alternatives**

**No Impact**

a, b) The project is a transportation project that focuses on increasing the traveler’s safety on an existing road; therefore, it would not increase the use of existing neighborhood, regional parks, or other facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. The project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

a, b, c) The proposed project is a road safety enhancement project and will improve traffic safety in the area. The project does not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The project does not conflict or is not inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15065.3, subdivision (b). The project does not substantially increase hazardous due to geometric design features. In fact, it reduces such hazards by widening the existing curve alignment.

**Less Than Significant Impact**

d) There will be less than significant impacts to emergency access. During construction, a one-lane access road will remain open for emergency responders. Therefore, construction of the project will not significantly impact emergency response times. Coordination with local agencies will occur before construction to minimize any possible impacts to emergency response.

**TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

a, b, c) Based on a records search from the Sacred Lands File and the Native American Coordination conducted for this project, there are no accounts of historical resources listed or eligible for listing being impacted in the proposed project. The project is not listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources (Caltrans, 2020). Please refer to Chapter 4 – Comments and Coordination for further information on the coordination process.

## UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems

#### Build Alternatives 1 and 2

##### No Impact

a, b, c, d, e) There will be no utilities relocated as a part of the Build Alternatives 1 or 2. The project will not require sufficient water supplies, or wastewater treatment to serve the project as this is a safety enhancement transportation project. The project will not generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Solid waste generated from excavation for the concrete lined drainage is minimal and is less than one foot deep. The project will comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. All soil excavated as part of the project is considered hazardous waste (Type Z-2 soil) and will require disposal at a Class I landfill facility.

**WILDFIRE**

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**No Impact**

b, c, d) The project will not change the infrastructure of the roadway. The roadway will remain the same, with a slight modification to widen the southbound lane. The increased width is less than three feet in length; therefore, it has no potential to exacerbate wildfire risks, result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment, or expose people or structures to significant risks. The project will not exacerbate wildfire risks and expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. It will not require the installation or maintenance of associated structures that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.

**Less Than Significant Impact**

a) The project will not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The project may temporarily increase emergency response times during construction. Operational traffic for emergency response will remain the same or even slightly improve after project completion due to the widening of the existing curve. Please refer to the Wildfire Section for further discussion.

**MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance**

**Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

**Less Than Significant Impact**

b, c) The project does not have impacts that are considered cumulatively significant. Effects to the environment are less than significant, temporary, and will cease at the end of construction. Therefore, the project also does not have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Caltrans Standard Specifications, Non-Standard Specifications and the Environmental Commitment (Appendix C – Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary) will apply to project construction to minimize, to the extent feasible, any environmental impacts.

**Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation**

a) Build Alternatives 1 and 2 will require the removal of the white alder, California bay laurel, arroyo willow, and big-leaf maple, which are trees from a protected special status alder riparian woodland community protected by the California Department Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Removing these trees will be a significant impact to the alder riparian woodland community. All trees will be replanted at ratios appropriate for the species of trees. Please see Table 15 for

specific information regarding tree replacement ratios. With the incorporation of the mitigation measure, impacts to the riparian community will be less than significant. Close coordination with CDFW throughout the design phase will minimize all potential impacts, to the extent feasible. Tree removal and vegetation trimming will not significantly alter the habitat of the steelhead trout (federally-listed species). It is not anticipated that the project will substantially degrade or alter the habitat of a fish or wildlife species as it is most impacts are temporary. The trees will be replanted in nearby locations and trimmed vegetation is anticipated to regrow in place.

## 3.2 Wildfire

### *Regulatory Setting*

Senate Bill 1241 required the Office of Planning and Research, the Natural Resources Agency, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop amendments to the “CEQA Checklist” for the inclusion of questions related to fire hazard impacts for projects located on lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The 2018 updates to the CEQA Guidelines expanded this to include projects “near” these very high fire hazard severity zones.

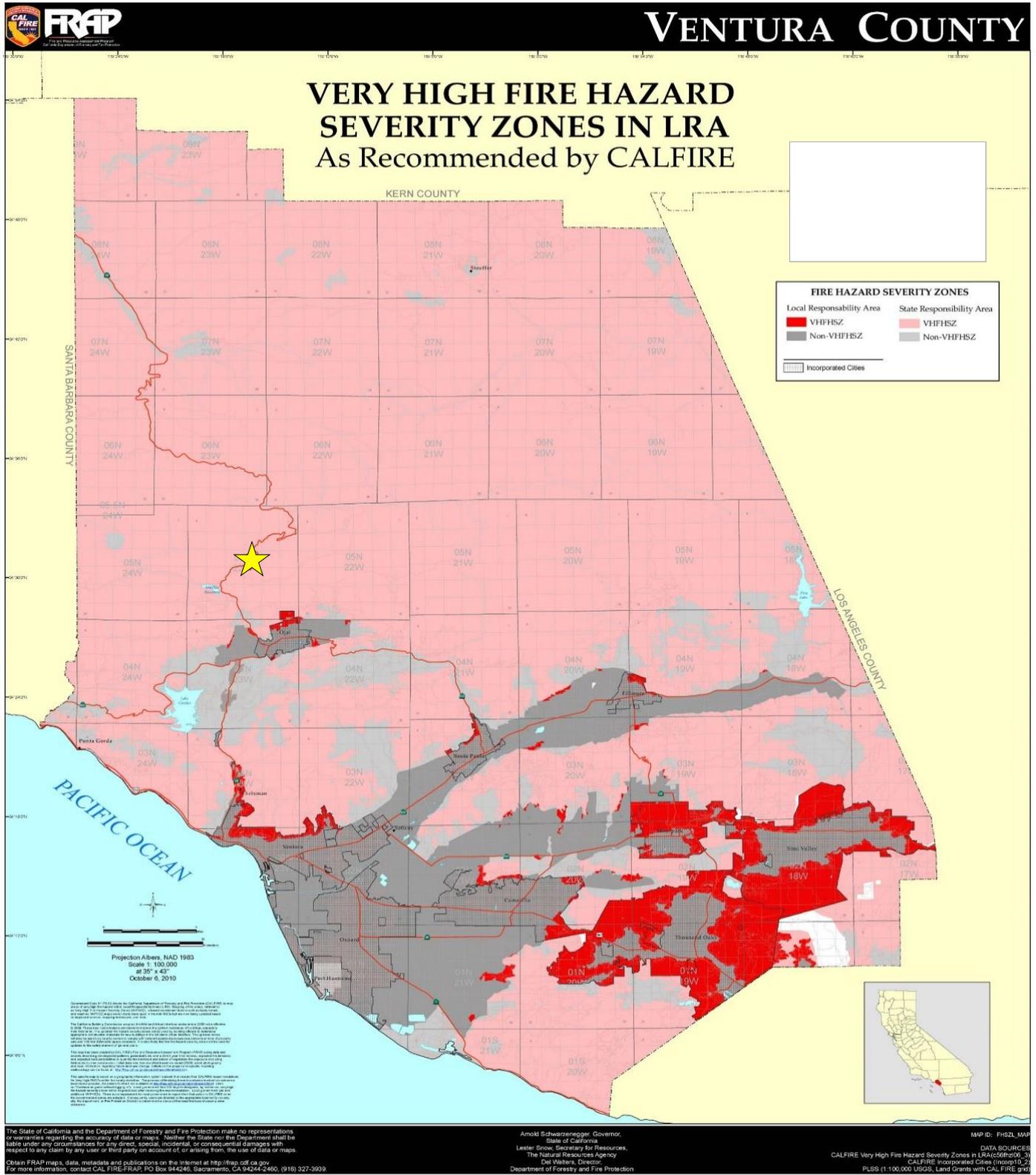
### *Affected Environment*

The proposed project is in a federal responsibility area classified as a very high fire hazard severity zone (Figure 19).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6846/fhszl\\_map56.pdf](https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/6846/fhszl_map56.pdf)

Figure 19. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Locally Responsible Area



## *Environmental Consequences*

### **No-Build Alternative**

Wildfires will not be exacerbated as a result of the No-Build Alternative because the current existing alignment will remain as it is.

### **Build Alternatives 1 and 2**

The Build Alternatives will not have long-term impacts to emergency response plans or evaluation plans. Emergency response times are only temporarily impacted during construction. However, one lane will remain opened to emergency personnel through the duration of construction. Therefore, only minimal impacts to emergency response times are anticipated. Coordination with County Emergency and Safety Offices will be conducted throughout project construction to ensure satisfactory response times. In addition, the project is being constructed on existing alignment and previously paved roads, and will not require installation of new infrastructure; therefore, the project will not exacerbate wildfire risks. In contrast, the project may potentially lessen fire risks by increasing roadway width. This will increase firebreaks, reduce flammable vegetation, enhance safety access, and reduce emergency response times.

The following standard measures will also be implemented during project construction to reduce wildfire impacts:

**T-1:** A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be implemented during construction to minimize traffic delays caused by road closures. Coordination with local emergency/protection services will be conducted to avoid and minimize all potential impacts to emergency responders.

**T-5:** Emergency access will be maintained for emergency personnel even during full roadway closures. California Highway Patrol (CHP) would be on-site during the 55-hr closures and will coordinate with the Resident Engineer for any emergencies.

### *Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures*

As the project will not exacerbate wildfire risks, no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required for the build alternatives.

### 3.3 Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the earth's climate system. An ever-increasing body of scientific research attributes these climatological changes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly those generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

While climate change has been a concern for several decades, the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization in 1988 led to increased efforts devoted to GHG emissions reduction and climate change research and policy. These efforts are primarily concerned with the emissions of GHGs generated by human activity, including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), and various hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). CO<sub>2</sub> is the most abundant GHG; while it is a naturally occurring component of Earth's atmosphere, fossil-fuel combustion is the main source of additional, human-generated CO<sub>2</sub>.

Two terms are typically used when discussing how we address the impacts of climate change: "greenhouse gas mitigation" and "adaptation." Greenhouse gas mitigation covers the activities and policies aimed at reducing GHG emissions to limit or "mitigate" the impacts of climate change. Adaptation, on the other hand, is concerned with planning for and responding to impacts resulting from climate change (such as adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms and higher sea levels). This analysis will include a discussion of both.

#### *Regulatory Setting*

This section outlines federal and state efforts to comprehensively reduce GHG emissions from transportation sources.

#### **Federal**

To date, no national standards have been established for nationwide mobile-source GHG reduction targets, nor have any regulations or legislation been enacted specifically to address climate change and GHG emissions reduction at the project level.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 USC Part 4332) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making a decision on the action or project.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the threats that extreme weather, sea-level change, and other changes in environmental conditions pose to valuable transportation infrastructure and those who depend on it. FHWA therefore supports a sustainability approach that assesses vulnerability to climate risks and incorporates resilience into planning, asset management, project development and design, and operations and maintenance practices (FHWA 2019). This approach encourages planning for sustainable highways by addressing

climate risks while balancing environmental, economic, and social values—“the triple bottom line of sustainability” (FHWA n.d.). Program and project elements that foster sustainability and resilience also support economic vitality and global efficiency, increase safety and mobility, enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life.

Various efforts have been promulgated at the federal level to improve fuel economy and energy efficiency to address climate change and its associated effects. The most important of these was the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (42 USC Section 6201) and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards. This act establishes fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States. Compliance with federal fuel economy standards is determined through the CAFE program based on each manufacturer’s average fuel economy for the portion of its vehicles produced for sale in the United States.

Energy Policy Act of 2005, 109th Congress H.R.6 (2005–2006): This act sets forth an energy research and development program covering: (1) energy efficiency; (2) renewable energy; (3) oil and gas; (4) coal; (5) the establishment of the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs within the Department of Energy; (6) nuclear matters and security; (7) vehicles and motor fuels, including ethanol; (8) hydrogen; (9) electricity; (10) energy tax incentives; (11) hydropower and geothermal energy; and (12) climate change technology.

The U.S. EPA in conjunction with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is responsible for setting GHG emission standards for new cars and light-duty vehicles to significantly increase the fuel economy of all new passenger cars and light trucks sold in the United States. Fuel efficiency standards directly influence GHG emissions.

## **State**

California has been innovative and proactive in addressing GHG emissions and climate change by passing multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders (EOs) including, but not limited to, the following:

EO S-3-05 (June 1, 2005): The goal of this EO is to reduce California’s GHG emissions to: (1) year 2000 levels by 2010, (2) year 1990 levels by 2020, and (3) 80 percent below year 1990 levels by 2050. This goal was further reinforced with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 32 in 2006 and Senate Bill (SB) 32 in 2016.

Assembly Bill (AB) 32, Chapter 488, 2006, Núñez and Pavley, The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: AB 32 codified the 2020 GHG emissions reduction goals outlined in EO S-3-05, while further mandating that the California Air Resources Board (ARB) create a scoping plan and implement rules to achieve “real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases.” The Legislature also intended that the statewide GHG emissions limit continue in existence and be used to maintain and continue reductions in emissions of GHGs beyond 2020 (Health and Safety Code [H&SC] Section 38551(b)). The law requires ARB to adopt rules and regulations in an open public process to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG reductions.

EO S-01-07 (January 18, 2007): This order sets forth the low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) for California. Under this EO, the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels is to be reduced by at least 10 percent by the year 2020. ARB re-adopted the LCFS regulation in September 2015, and the changes went into effect on January 1, 2016. The program establishes a strong framework to promote the low-carbon fuel adoption necessary to achieve the governor's 2030 and 2050 GHG reduction goals.

Senate Bill (SB) 375, Chapter 728, 2008, Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection: This bill requires ARB to set regional emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicles. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each region must then develop a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" (SCS) that integrates transportation, land-use, and housing policies to plan how it will achieve the emissions target for its region.

SB 391, Chapter 585, 2009, California Transportation Plan: This bill requires the State's long-range transportation plan to identify strategies to address California's climate change goals under AB 32.

EO B-16-12 (March 2012) orders State entities under the direction of the Governor, including ARB, the California Energy Commission, and the Public Utilities Commission, to support the rapid commercialization of zero-emission vehicles. It directs these entities to achieve various benchmarks related to zero-emission vehicles.

EO B-30-15 (April 2015) establishes an interim statewide GHG emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to ensure California meets its target of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It further orders all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of GHG emissions to implement measures, pursuant to statutory authority, to achieve reductions of GHG emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions reductions targets. It also directs ARB to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMT $\text{CO}_2\text{e}$ ).<sup>25</sup> Finally, it requires the Natural Resources Agency to update the state's climate adaptation strategy, *Safeguarding California*, every 3 years, and to ensure that its provisions are fully implemented.

SB 32, Chapter 249, 2016, codifies the GHG reduction targets established in EO B-30-15 to achieve a mid-range goal of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

SB 1386, Chapter 545, 2016, declared "it to be the policy of the state that the protection and management of natural and working lands ... is an important strategy in meeting the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals, and would require all state agencies, departments, boards, and

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<sup>25</sup> GHGs differ in how much heat each trap in the atmosphere (global warming potential, or GWP).  $\text{CO}_2$  is the most important GHG, so amounts of other gases are expressed relative to  $\text{CO}_2$ , using a metric called "carbon dioxide equivalent" ( $\text{CO}_2\text{e}$ ). The global warming potential of  $\text{CO}_2$  is assigned a value of 1, and the GWP of other gases is assessed as multiples of  $\text{CO}_2$ .

commissions to consider this policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, expenditures, or grant criteria relating to the protection and management of natural and working lands.”

AB 134, Chapter 254, 2017, allocates Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds and other sources to various clean vehicle programs, demonstration/pilot projects, clean vehicle rebates and projects, and other emissions-reduction programs statewide.

SB 743, Chapter 386 (September 2013): This bill changes the metric of consideration for transportation impacts pursuant to CEQA from a focus on automobile delay to alternative methods focused on vehicle miles travelled, to promote the state’s goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic related air pollution and promoting multimodal transportation while balancing the needs of congestion management and safety.

SB 150, Chapter 150, 2017, Regional Transportation Plans: This bill requires ARB to prepare a report that assesses progress made by each metropolitan planning organization in meeting their established regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

EO B-55-18 (September 2018) sets a new statewide goal to achieve and maintain carbon neutrality no later than 2045. This goal is in addition to existing statewide targets of reducing GHG emissions.

EO N-19-19 (September 2019) advances California’s climate goals in part by directing the California State Transportation Agency to leverage annual transportation spending to reverse the trend of increased fuel consumption and reduce GHG emissions from the transportation sector. It orders a focus on transportation investments near housing, managing congestion, and encouraging alternatives to driving. This EO also directs ARB to encourage automakers to produce more clean vehicles, formulate ways to help Californians purchase them, and propose strategies to increase demand for zero-emission vehicles.

### *Environmental Setting*

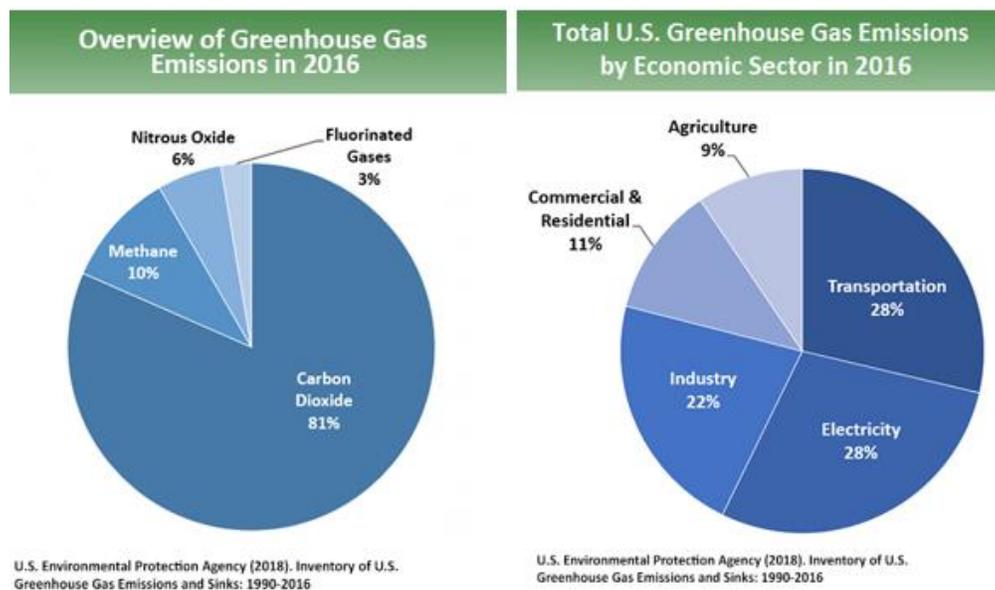
The proposed project is in a rural area, surrounded by forestland and open space owned by the US Forest Service. State Route (SR) 33 is the main transportation route through the area for both passenger and commercial vehicles. Traffic counts are low and SR 33 is rarely congested. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) guides transportation development. The Ventura County General Plan Climate Change element address GHGs in the project area.

A GHG emissions inventory estimates the amount of GHGs discharged into the atmosphere by specific sources over a period, such as a calendar year. Tracking annual GHG emissions allows countries, states, and smaller jurisdictions to understand how emissions are changing and what actions may be needed to attain emission reduction goals. U.S. EPA is responsible for documenting GHG emissions nationwide, and the ARB does so for the state, as required by H&SC Section 39607.4.

## National GHG Inventory

The U.S. EPA prepares a national GHG inventory every year and submits it to the United Nations in accordance with the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The inventory provides a comprehensive accounting of all human-produced sources of GHGs in the United States, reporting emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, HFCs, perfluorocarbons, SF<sub>6</sub>, and nitrogen trifluoride. It also accounts for emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> that are removed from the atmosphere by “sinks” such as forests, vegetation, and soils that uptake and store CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon sequestration). The 1990–2016 inventory found that of 6,511 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e GHG emissions in 2016, 81% consist of CO<sub>2</sub>, 10% are CH<sub>4</sub>, and 6% are N<sub>2</sub>O; the balance consists of fluorinated gases (U.S. EPA 2018). In 2016, GHG emissions from the transportation sector accounted for nearly 28.5% of U.S. GHG emissions.

Figure 20. U.S. 2016 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions



## State GHG Inventory

ARB collects GHG emissions data for transportation, electricity, commercial/residential, industrial, agricultural, and waste management sectors each year. It then summarizes and highlights major annual changes and trends to demonstrate the state’s progress in meeting its GHG reduction goals. The 2019 edition of the GHG emissions inventory found total California emissions of 424.1 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e for 2017, with the transportation sector responsible for 41% of total GHGs. It also found that overall statewide GHG emissions declined from 2000 to 2017 despite growth in population and state economic output (ARB 2019a).

Figure 21. California 2017 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

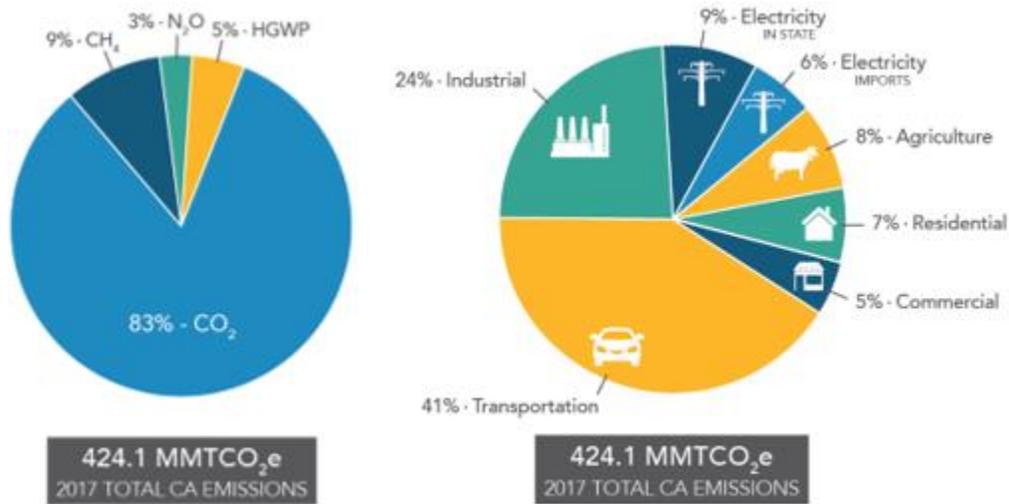
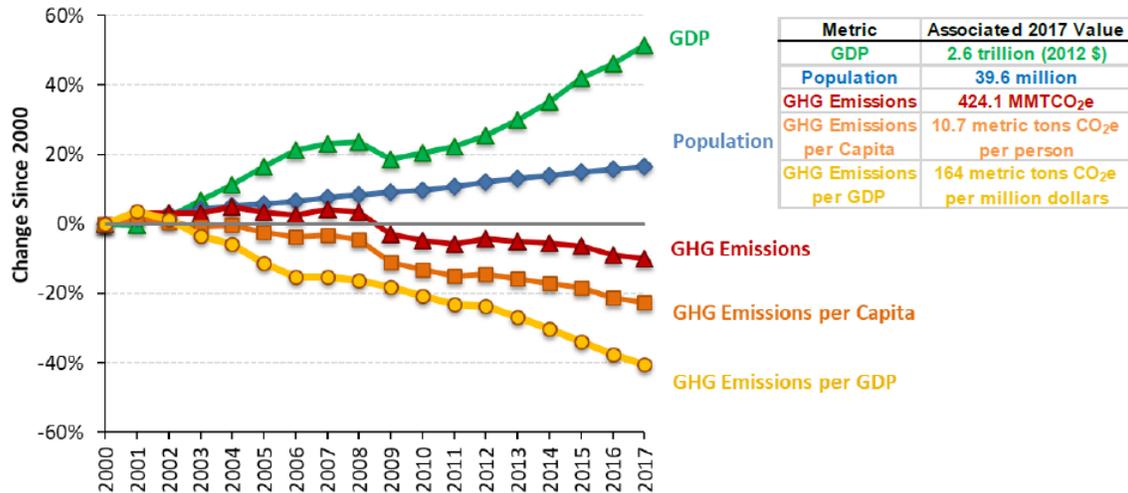


Figure 22. Change in California GDP, Population, and GHG Emissions since 2000  
(Source: ARB 2019b)



AB 32 required ARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to update it every 5 years. ARB adopted the first scoping plan in 2008. The second updated plan, *California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan*, adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in EO B-30-15 and SB 32. The AB 32 Scoping Plan and the subsequent updates contain the main strategies California will use to reduce GHG emissions.

## Regional Plans

ARB sets regional targets for California's 18 MPOs to use in their Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) to plan future projects that will cumulatively achieve GHG reduction goals. Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle GHG emissions per person from 2005 levels. The proposed project is included in the RTP/SCS for SCAG. The regional reduction target for SCAG is -8% percent BY 2020 AND -19% BY 2035 (ARB 2019c).

The proposed project is within the jurisdiction of the SCAG Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA). The SCAG 2016-2040 RTP identifies several measures that address greenhouse gas emissions. They include methods based on design, methods based on planning, and methods based on technology and equipment type. Design methods target emission reduction goals through implementation of project features, project design, or other measures; incorporating design measures to reduce GHG emissions from solid waste management through encouraging solid waste recycling and reuse; or incorporating design measures to reduce energy consumption and increase use of renewable energy. Planning methods require the adoption of plans or mitigation programs for the reduction of emissions as required as part of the Lead Agency's decision. Methods based on technology and equipment type include: incorporating Best Available Control Technology (BACT) during design, construction, and operation of projects to minimize GHG emissions; use of energy and fuel-efficient vehicles and equipment; use of the minimum feasible amount of GHG emitting construction materials; and construction of buildings to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified standards. Additionally, another suggested method is to plant shade trees in or near construction projects where feasible.

There are other general plans, land use plans, and local climate action plans that also offer strategies that can be incorporated into specific projects. In addition, many cities and counties in District 7 have adopted Climate Action Plans (CAPs) designed to mitigate GHG emissions and reduce the impacts of climate change to their communities.

## Project Analysis

GHG emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation of the SHS and those produced during construction. The primary GHGs produced by the transportation sector are CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, and HFCs. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are a product of the combustion of petroleum-based products, like gasoline, in internal combustion engines. Relatively small amounts of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O are emitted during fuel combustion. In addition, a small amount of HFC emissions are included in the transportation sector.

The CEQA Guidelines generally address greenhouse gas emissions as a cumulative impact due to the global nature of climate change (Pub. Resources Code, § 21083(b)(2)). As the California Supreme Court explained, "because of the global scale of climate change, any one project's contribution is unlikely to be significant by itself." (*Cleveland National Forest Foundation v. San Diego Assn. of Governments* (2017) 3 Cal.5th 497, 512.) In assessing cumulative impacts, it must

be determined if a project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable" (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130).

To make this determination, the incremental impacts of the project must be compared with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. Although climate change is ultimately a cumulative impact, not every individual project that emits greenhouse gases must necessarily be found to contribute to a significant cumulative impact on the environment.

### **Operational Emissions**

The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance roadway safety for travelers and to reduce collisions to the rock barrier, and therefore, it will not increase the vehicle capacity of the roadway. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational GHG emissions. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on SR 33, no increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) would occur as a result of project implementation. While some GHG emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable, no increase in operational GHG emissions is expected.

### **Construction Emissions**

Construction GHG emissions would result from material processing, on-site construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.

In addition, with innovations such as longer pavement lives, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, the GHG emissions produced during construction can be offset to some degree by longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

The emissions from temporary construction activities have been estimated using the Caltrans Emissions Tool 2018 (CAL-CET) v1.2. For the duration of project construction, approximately 125 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> would be generated for Build Alternative 1 and 92 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> would be generated for Build Alternative 2. GHG measures proposed in the consequent sections would also be applied to this project to reduce emissions.

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction, which require contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all ARB emission reduction regulations; and Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, which requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce GHG emissions.

## CEQA Conclusion

While the proposed project will result in GHG emissions during construction, it is anticipated that the project will not result in any increase in operational GHG emissions. The proposed project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. With implementation of construction GHG-reduction measures, the impact would be less than significant.

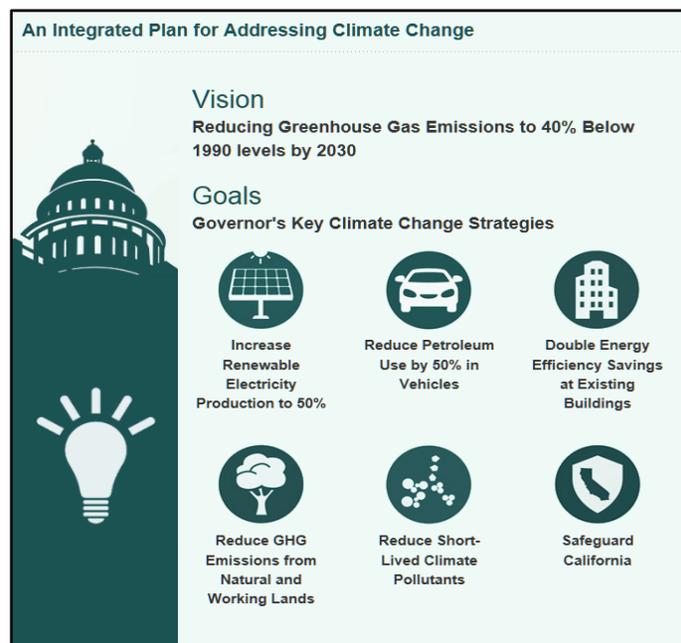
Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce GHG emissions. These measures are outlined in the following section.

## Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

### Statewide Efforts

Major sectors of the California economy, including transportation, will need to reduce emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions targets. Former Governor Edmund G. Brown promoted GHG reduction goals that involved (1) reducing today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent; (2) increasing from one-third to 50 percent our electricity derived from renewable sources; (3) doubling the energy efficiency savings achieved at existing buildings and making heating fuels cleaner; (4) reducing the release of methane, black carbon, and other short-lived climate pollutants; (5) managing farms and rangelands, forests, and wetlands so they can store carbon; and (6) periodically updating the state's climate adaptation strategy, *Safeguarding California*.

Figure 23. California Climate Strategy



The transportation sector is integral to the people and economy of California. To achieve GHG emission reduction goals, it is vital that the state build on past successes in reducing criteria and toxic air pollutants from transportation and goods movement. GHG emission reductions will

come from cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). A key state goal for reducing GHG emissions is to reduce today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent by 2030 (State of California 2019).

In addition, SB 1386 (Wolk 2016) established as state policy the protection and management of natural and working lands and requires state agencies to consider that policy in their own decision making. Trees and vegetation on forests, rangelands, farms, and wetlands remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through biological processes and sequester the carbon in above- and below-ground matter.

### **Caltrans Activities**

Caltrans continues to be involved on the Governor's Climate Action Team as the ARB works to implement EOs S-3-05 and S-01-07 and help achieve the targets set forth in AB 32. EO B-30-15, issued in April 2015, and SB 32 (2016), set an interim target to cut GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The following major initiatives are underway at Caltrans to help meet these targets.

#### ***California Transportation Plan (CTP 2040)***

The California Transportation Plan (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation plan to meet our future mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions. In 2016, Caltrans completed the *California Transportation Plan 2040*, which establishes a new model for developing ground transportation systems, consistent with CO<sub>2</sub> reduction goals. It serves as an umbrella document for all the other statewide transportation planning documents. Over the next 25 years, California will be working to improve transit and reduce long-run repair and maintenance costs of roadways and developing a comprehensive assessment of climate-related transportation demand management and new technologies rather than continuing to expand capacity on existing roadways.

SB 391 (Liu 2009) requires the CTP to meet California's climate change goals under AB 32. Accordingly, the CTP 2040 identifies the statewide transportation system needed to achieve maximum feasible GHG emission reductions while meeting the state's transportation needs. While MPOs have primary responsibility for identifying land use patterns to help reduce GHG emissions, CTP 2040 identifies additional strategies in Pricing, Transportation Alternatives, Mode Shift, and Operational Efficiency.

#### ***Caltrans Strategic Management Plan***

The Strategic Management Plan, released in 2015, creates a performance-based framework to preserve the environment and reduce GHG emissions, among other goals. Specific performance targets in the plan that will help to reduce GHG emissions include:

- Increasing percentage of non-auto mode share
- Reducing VMT
- Reducing Caltrans' internal operational (buildings, facilities, and fuel) GHG emissions

### ***Funding and Technical Assistance Programs***

In addition to developing plans and performance targets to reduce GHG emissions, Caltrans also administers several sustainable transportation planning grants. These grants encourage local and regional multimodal transportation, housing, and land use planning that furthers the region's RTP/SCS; contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets and advance transportation-related GHG emission reduction project types/strategies; and support other climate adaptation goals (e.g., *Safeguarding California*).

### ***Caltrans Policy Directives and Other Initiatives***

Caltrans Director's Policy 30 (DP-30) Climate Change (June 22, 2012) is intended to establish a Department policy that will ensure coordinated efforts to incorporate climate change into Departmental decisions and activities. *Caltrans Activities to Address Climate Change* (April 2013) provides a comprehensive overview of Caltrans' statewide activities to reduce GHG emissions resulting from agency operations.

### **Project-Level GHG Reduction Strategies**

The following measures will also be implemented in the project to reduce GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project.

**T-1:** A Traffic Management Plan will be established during the design phase of the project. This will include public information, motorist's information, incident management, construction strategies, etc. The TMP will also maintain travel in both directions and minimize traffic delays and idling that can produce GHGs.

**GHG-1:** Idling is limited to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).

**GHG-2:** Schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.

**GHG-3:** Reduce construction waste by re-using or recycling construction and demolition waste.

**GHG-4:** Use recycled water for construction to reduce construction water consumption of potable water.

**GHG-5:** Maintain equipment in proper working condition, using the right size equipment for the job, and use equipment with new technologies to improve fuel efficiency.

**GHG-6:** Provide construction personnel with the knowledge to identify environmental issues and best practice methods to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment. Supplement existing trainings with information regarding methods to reduce GHG emissions related to construction.

**GHG-7:** The contractor must balance cut and fill quantities to reduce the need for transport of earthen materials.

## Adaptation

Reducing GHG emissions is only one part of an approach to addressing climate change. Caltrans must plan for the effects of climate change on the state's transportation infrastructure and strengthen or protect the facilities from damage. Climate change is expected to produce increased variability in precipitation, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, variability in storm surges and their intensity, and in the frequency and intensity of wildfires. Flooding and erosion can damage or wash out roads; longer periods of intense heat can buckle pavement and railroad tracks; storm surges combined with a rising sea level can inundate highways. Wildfire can directly burn facilities and indirectly cause damage when rain falls on denuded slopes that landslide after a fire. Effects will vary by location and may, in the most extreme cases, require that a facility be relocated or redesigned. Accordingly, Caltrans must consider these types of climate stressors in how highways are planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained.

## Federal Efforts

Under NEPA assignment, Caltrans is obligated to comply with all applicable federal environmental laws and FHWA NEPA regulations, policies, and guidance.

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) delivers a report to Congress and the president every 4 years, in accordance with the Global Change Research Act of 1990 (15 U.S.C. CH<sub>2</sub> 56A § 2921 et seq). The *Fourth National Climate Assessment*, published in 2018, presents the foundational science and the "human welfare, societal, and environmental elements of climate change and variability for 10 regions and 18 national topics, with particular attention paid to observed and projected risks, impacts, consideration of risk reduction, and implications under different mitigation pathways." Chapter 12, "Transportation," presents a key discussion of vulnerability assessments. It notes that "asset owners and operators have increasingly conducted more focused studies of particular assets that consider multiple climate hazards and scenarios in the context of asset-specific information, such as design lifetime" (USGCRP 2018).

The U.S. DOT Policy Statement on Climate Adaptation in June 2011 committed the federal Department of Transportation to "integrate consideration of climate change impacts and adaptation into the planning, operations, policies, and programs of DOT in order to ensure that taxpayer resources are invested wisely, and that transportation infrastructure, services and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions" (U.S. DOT 2011).

FHWA order 5520 (*Transportation System Preparedness and Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events*, December 15, 2014) established FHWA policy to strive to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events to current and planned transportation systems. FHWA has developed guidance and tools for transportation planning that foster resilience to climate effects and sustainability at the federal, state, and local levels (FHWA 2019).

## State Efforts

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system. *California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment* (2018) is the state's effort to "translate the state of climate science into useful information for action" in a variety of sectors at both statewide and local scales. It adopts the following key terms used widely in climate change analysis and policy documents:

- *Adaptation* to climate change refers to adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.
- *Adaptive capacity* is the "combination of the strengths, attributes, and resources available to an individual, community, society, or organization that can be used to prepare for and undertake actions to reduce adverse impacts, moderate harm, or exploit beneficial opportunities."
- *Exposure* is the presence of people, infrastructure, natural systems, and economic, cultural, and social resources in areas that are subject to harm.
- *Resilience* is the "capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organization, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience". Adaptation actions contribute to increasing resilience, which is a desired outcome or state of being.
- *Sensitivity* is the level to which a species, natural system, or community, government, etc., would be affected by changing climate conditions.
- *Vulnerability* is the "susceptibility to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of capacity to adapt." Vulnerability can increase because of physical (built and environmental), social, political, and/or economic factor(s). These factors include, but are not limited to: ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and identification, national origin, and income inequality. Vulnerability is often defined as the combination of sensitivity and adaptive capacity as affected by the level of exposure to changing climate.

Several key state policies have guided climate change adaptation efforts to date. Recent state publications produced in response to these policies draw on these definitions.

EO S-13-08, issued by then-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in November 2008, focused on sea-level rise and resulted in the *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* (2009), updated in 2014 as *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* (Safeguarding California Plan). The Safeguarding California Plan offers policy principles and recommendations and continues to be revised and

augmented with sector-specific adaptation strategies, ongoing actions, and next steps for agencies.

EO S-13-08 also led to the publication of a series of sea-level rise assessment reports and associated guidance and policies. These reports formed the foundation of an interim *State of California Sea-Level Rise Interim Guidance Document* (SLR Guidance) in 2010, with instructions for how state agencies could incorporate “sea-level rise (SLR) projections into planning and decision making for projects in California” in a consistent way across agencies. The guidance was revised and augmented in 2013. *Rising Seas in California – An Update on Sea-Level Rise Science* was published in 2017 and its updated projections of sea-level rise and new understanding of processes and potential impacts in California were incorporated into the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Update* in 2018.

EO B-30-15, signed in April 2015, requires state agencies to factor climate change into all planning and investment decisions. This EO recognizes that effects of climate change other than sea-level rise also threaten California’s infrastructure. At the direction of EO B-30-15, the Office of Planning and Research published *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies* in 2017, to encourage a uniform and systematic approach. Representatives of Caltrans participated in the multi-agency, multidisciplinary technical advisory group that developed this guidance on how to integrate climate change into planning and investment.

AB 2800 (Quirk 2016) created the multidisciplinary Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group, which in 2018 released its report, *Paying it Forward: The Path Toward Climate-Safe Infrastructure in California*. The report provides guidance to agencies on how to address the challenges of assessing risk in the face of inherent uncertainties still posed by the best available science on climate change. It also examines how state agencies can use infrastructure planning, design, and implementation processes to address the observed and anticipated climate change impacts.

## **Caltrans Adaptation Efforts**

### *Caltrans Vulnerability Assessments*

Caltrans is conducting climate change vulnerability assessments to identify segments of the State Highway System vulnerable to climate change effects including precipitation, temperature, wildfire, storm surge, and sea-level rise. The approach to the vulnerability assessments was tailored to the practices of a transportation agency, and involves the following concepts and actions:

- *Exposure* – Identify Caltrans assets exposed to damage or reduced service life from expected future conditions.
- *Consequence* – Determine what might occur to system assets in terms of loss of use or costs of repair.

- *Prioritization* – Develop a method for making capital programming decisions to address identified risks, including considerations of system use and/or timing of expected exposure.

The climate change data in the assessments were developed in coordination with climate change scientists and experts at federal, state, and regional organizations at the forefront of climate science. The findings of the vulnerability assessments will guide analysis of at-risk assets and development of adaptation plans to reduce the likelihood of damage to the State Highway System, allowing Caltrans to both reduce the costs of storm damage and to provide and maintain transportation that meets the needs of all Californians.

### **Project Adaptation Analysis**

It is possible that the proposed project will be subject to climate change effects. The proposed project is not located near the seacoast or within a regulatory floodway; however, it may be susceptible to wildfire. Recognizing these concerns, it is important to determine whether the project will exacerbate the effects of climate change relating to these topics, which are elaborated upon in the following sections (Floodplains and Wildfire).

Caltrans District 7 completed a climate change vulnerability assessment in September 2019 for Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. It provides a high-level review of potential climate impacts to the State Highway System in District 7 based on a database containing climate stressor geospatial data that was developed as part of the study.

Climate change risk analysis involves uncertainties as to the timing and intensity of potential risks, but some general climate trends are expected in California and the western U.S. More severe droughts, less snowpack, and changes in water availability are anticipated, and rising sea levels, more severe storm impacts, and coastal erosion can be expected. Increased temperatures and more frequent, longer heat waves, as well as longer and more severe wildfire seasons are predicted.

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research prepared *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*, a guidebook for state agencies performing climate risk analyses to determine how to integrate climate considerations into planning or investment decisions. The first step is to identify how climate change could affect a project or plan by identifying impacts of concern and assessing the scale, scope, and context of climate disruption. Next, a climate risk analysis can be conducted by selecting climate change scenarios for analysis and selecting an analytical approach. Following that, a climate-informed decision can be made by evaluating the alternatives and design and applying resilient decision principles. Finally, the agency can track and monitor progress by evaluating determined metrics, adjusting as needed. This study will go through the first two steps to inform a decision for the proposed project.

Assessing the scale, scope, and context of climate disruption for this project means considering the timeframe/lifetime, adaptive capacity, and risk tolerance of the project areas. The guidebook states, “If the expected lifetime of a project is less than five years, it may not be necessary to

integrate longer-term climate change into the design and analysis.” The completed project is expected to last far longer than five years, so the impacts of extreme events should be considered to ensure that planning and investment decisions reflect the current climate conditions. In the following sections, extreme impacts of climate change-based sea-level rise, flooding, and wildfire will be considered. Other extreme weather impacts, such as drought and extreme heat, are also anticipated as changing climate conditions, but this study will focus on conditions that could potentially affect the project and its proposed structures.

Climate risk is characterized by asking a few key questions, focusing on the scale and scope of the risk, vulnerability and adaptive capacity of the affected area, the nature of the risk, and the economic impacts.

*Question 1: How severe are the consequences if your project or plan is disrupted by an extreme event or by changes in average conditions?*

If construction of the project is disrupted by an extreme event, schedule delays and increased costs are expected. Economic implications will be addressed in Question 4, and based on the severity, this would be a moderate impact. It is not unacceptable and is not likely to ultimately affect the completion of the project, but it would be an inconvenience and require additional planning and coordination, along with extra work to repair damage done by an extreme condition. In fact, should an extreme event occur in the future, the completion of the project may help to mitigate these effects. Preserving and improving structural integrity will help to increase resilience of the highway to climate change.

The impact of average conditions disrupting the project or plan depends on the severity of these changes. Assuming the average changes are small or even negligible during the timeframe of project construction and completion by 2023, there would be low or no impact for design, planning, and construction.

*Question 2: Who or what will be affected by disruption of the project or plan?*

Disruption of the project will affect state highway users in the long term by delaying construction, but not the immediate short term. If disruption occurs during construction, construction workers would also be affected. With communication and the emergency planning in place, the impact would be low to moderate; communities, systems, and infrastructure should be readily able to adapt or respond to any changes. Detours or other transportation methods could be arranged.

*Question 3: What is the nature of this disruption?*

Schedule delay would be the primary concern if the project is disrupted; however, it is expected that any disruption by climate change effects would not be permanent. Use of the highway or construction of the project would be able to continue; therefore, the nature of this disruption is

temporary. Future flexibility would be maintained, and Caltrans and drivers would be readily able to respond or adapt.

*Question 4: What are the economic implications of climate disruption?*

As stated in the response to Question 1, schedule delays and increased costs would be expected as a result of climate disruption. Both could potentially be large, depending on the extent and type of disruption. It is unlikely that the costs of disruption or response to the disruption would be unacceptably high. It is likely that such costs would be between a low to medium cost.

Figure 24. Mapping Risk Characteristics to Analytical Approaches

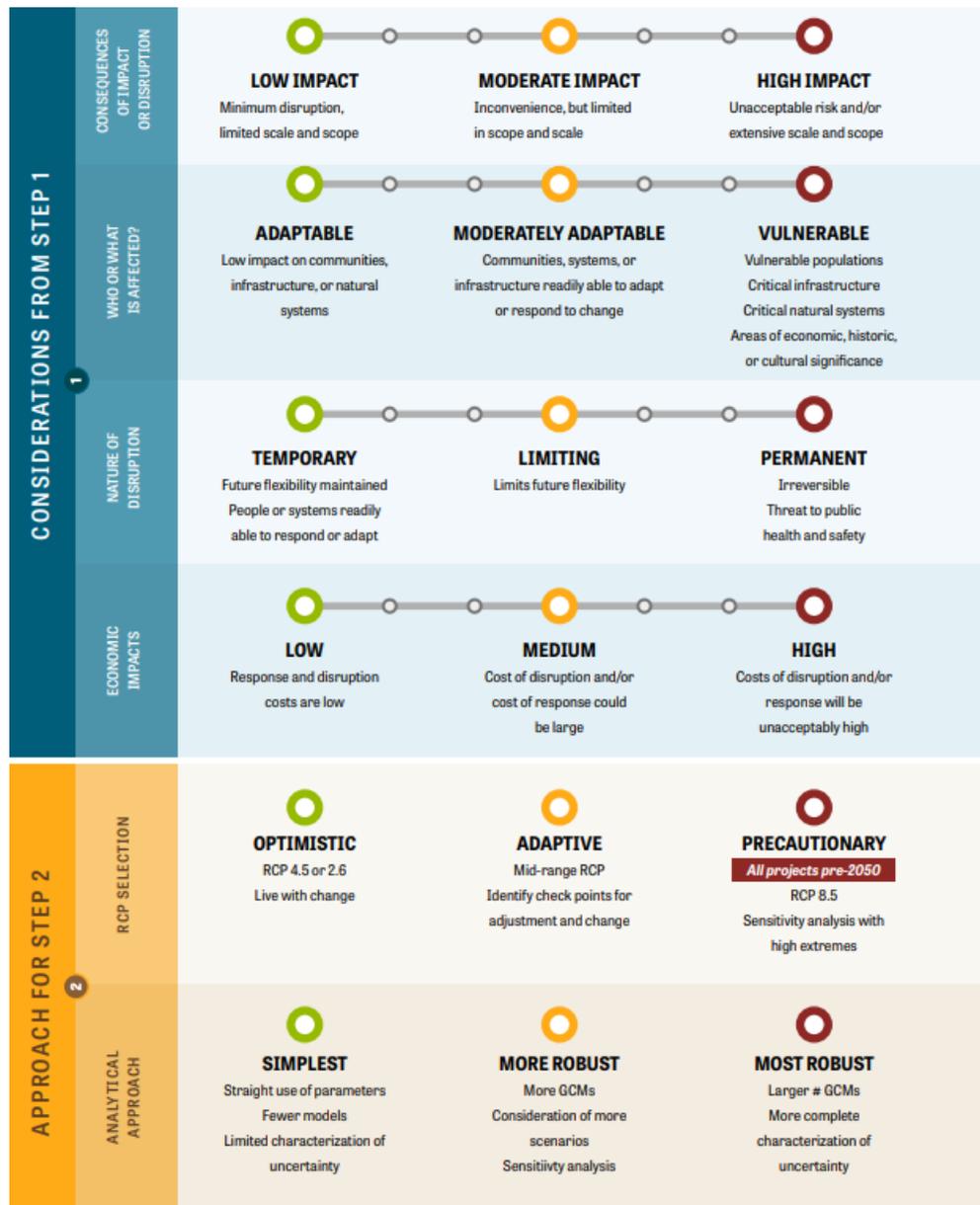


Figure 24 above (from Figure 25 in *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California*) matches the answers from the four questions with characteristics of analytical approaches and climate scenarios. For this analysis, because most answers were low or low-moderate, an optimistic RCP is selected, and a simple approach is used.

The Caltrans District 7 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Map provides assessments for both RCP 4.5 and 8.5. Please refer to the following sections for the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Maps and further discussion. This is consistent with the conclusion that the proposed project has a low likelihood to be vulnerable to climate change conditions, and it may speak to the fact that the resilience to any disruption would be high for the project and surrounding area.

The proposed project is not expected to exacerbate any of the risks discussed above. Though the risks inherent to climate change already in progress are considered, the project would not contribute to acceleration or increase of any such dangers in any significant way. It would not alter the highway's relation to the surrounding environment significantly, and it would not cause any significant change to the environment that would allow for increased or greater danger in the future.

#### *Sea-Level Rise*

The proposed project is outside the coastal zone and not in an area subject to sea-level rise. Accordingly, direct impacts to transportation facilities due to projected sea-level rise are not expected.

#### *Floodplains*

The proposed project is outside of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone and is not in an area subject to extreme flooding. Accordingly, the proposed project is not expected to exacerbate flooding to the transportation facility.

#### *Wildfire*

As an effect of climate change, it is expected that longer and more severe wildfire seasons will occur across California. The project location on SR 33 is in a Federal Responsibility Area (FRA), within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone according to Fire Hazard Severity Zone mapping tool (Figure 25).

District 7's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment map indicates a high level of concern for Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) Scenarios 2025 through 2085, for RCP 4.5 (Figure 26). For RCP 8.5, a moderate level of concern is given for Scenarios 2025 through 2085 (Figure 27). RCP 4.5 is the modeling scenario in which emissions peak around 2040, then decline. RCP 8.5 is the modeling scenario in which emissions continue to rise strongly through 2050 and plateau around 2100. The project purpose is to enhance roadway safety for travelers and to reduce collisions to the rock barrier. The Build Alternatives would not introduce new vulnerable structures or uses and is not expected to increase the potential for wildfire in the area. The project may potentially lessen fire risks by increasing roadway width. This would increase firebreaks, reduce flammable vegetation, enhance safety access, and reduce emergency

response times. During construction, Caltrans 2018 revised Standard Specification 7 1.02M(2) mandates fire prevention procedures, including a fire prevention plan, to minimize the risk of inadvertent fire starts.

Figure 25. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map

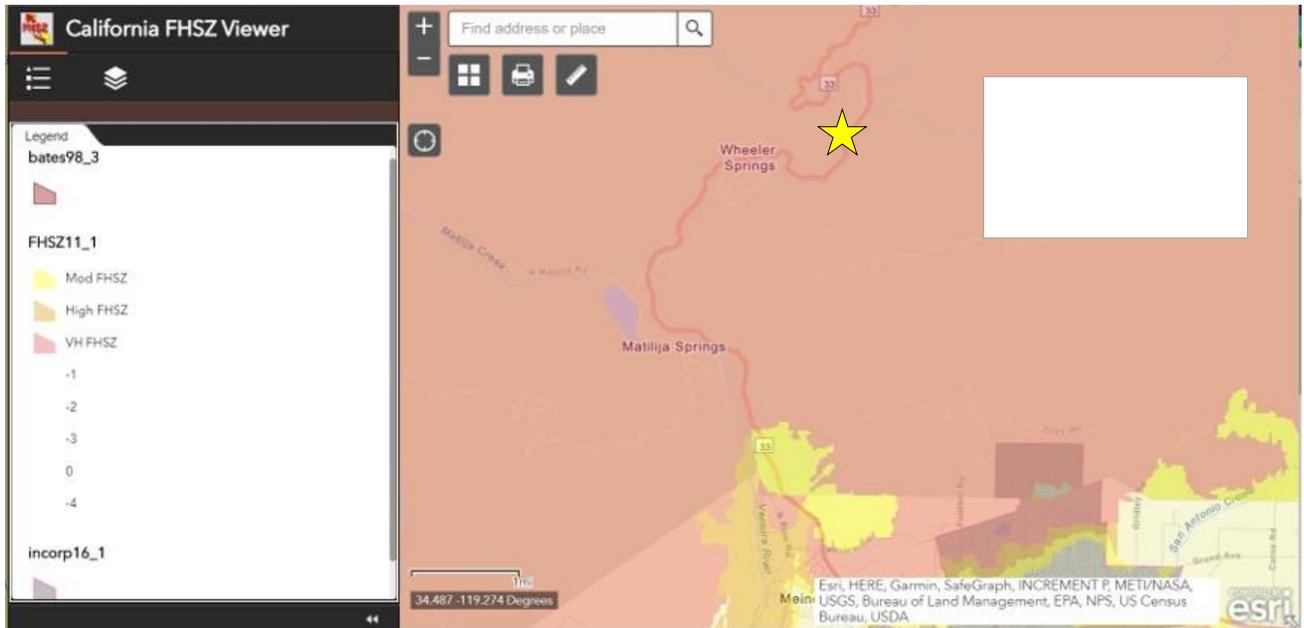


Figure 26. Caltrans District 7 Climate Change Vulnerability: Wildfire Exposure RCP 4.5

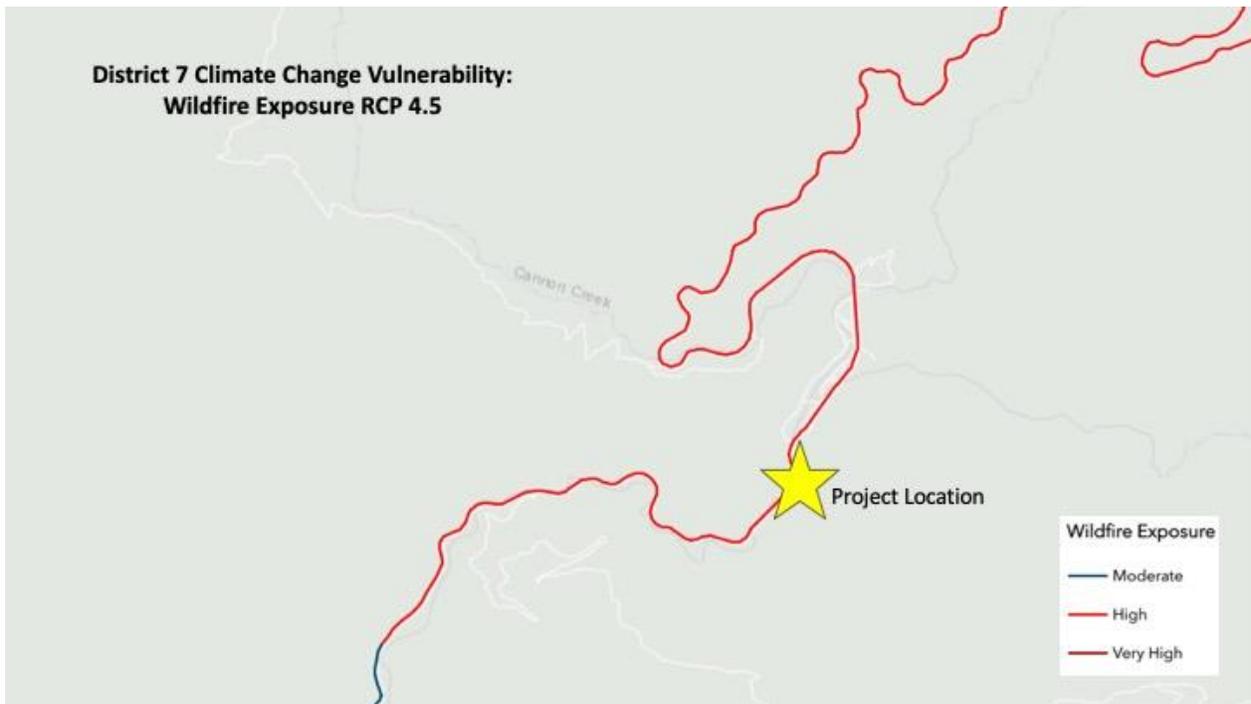
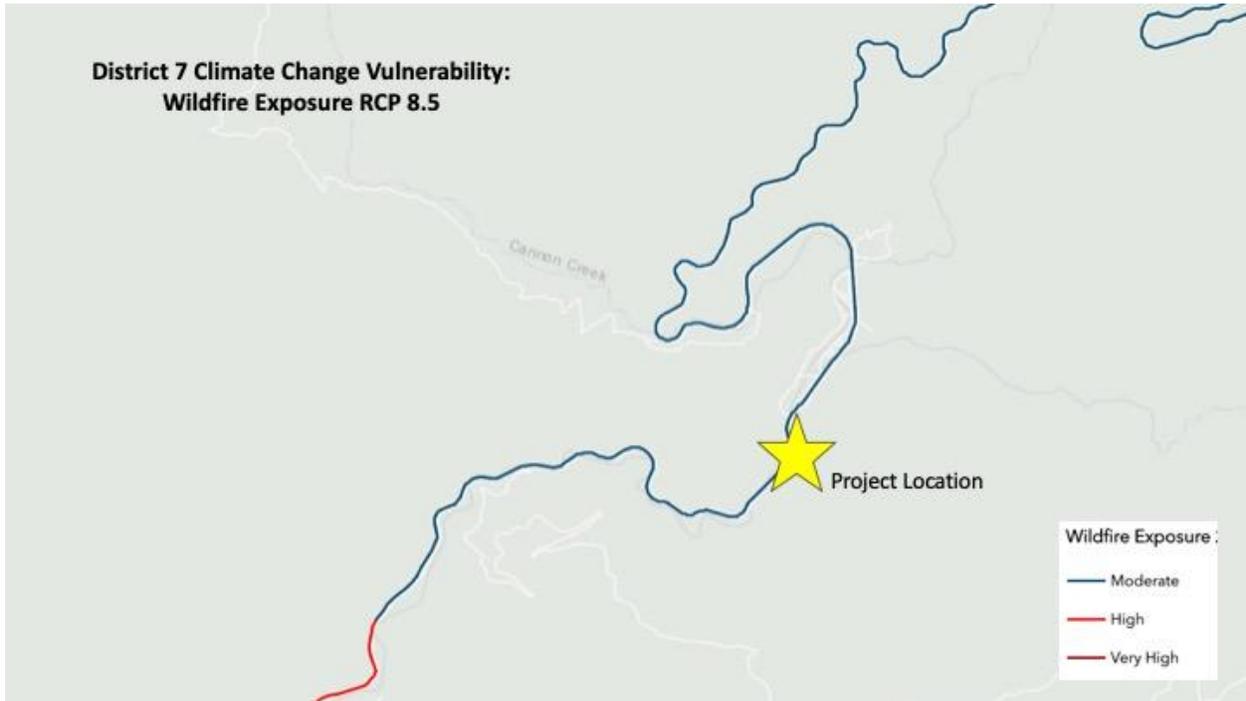


Figure 27. Caltrans District 7 Climate Change Vulnerability: Wildfire Exposure RCP 8.5



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## Chapter 4 – Comments and Coordination

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Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency, tribal consultation, and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team (PDT) meetings and early coordination with relevant stakeholders. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

### Notice of Initiation of Studies

On December 14, 2019, a Notice of Initiation of Studies was sent to relevant public agencies, organizations, elected officials, native tribal contacts, and other interested individuals as a part of the early coordination process. Approximately 13 elected officials, 62 agencies/organizations, and 77 residents/property owners within the 2 miles of the project area were notified through mail. The comment period ended on January 30, 2020.

A total of three comments were received during early coordination process. The comments are summarized below:

- On January 14, 2020, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) inquired whether streams, adjacent habitats or sensitive species will be incorporated in the biological study and requested a list of the studies that will be performed. Caltrans responded through email and informed CDFW of the types of protocol surveys, studies and coordination that was anticipated for this project.
- On January 10, 2020, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) informed Caltrans that they would like a notified when the environmental process is complete. Caltrans will send the required submittal package to CTC once the project approval and environmental documents are complete.
- On December 30, 2019, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided information on the latest Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the County of Ventura and a summary of the floodplain management building requirements in the project area. The project area is not within a flood zone.

### Cooperating Agency Invitations

On March 10, 2020, letters were sent to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) inviting them to be a Cooperating Agency on the project. On March 30, 2020, the USACE accepted the invitation to be a Cooperating Agency on the project. Written correspondence can be found on Appendix D – Cooperating Agencies Documentation.

### **Native American Consultation**

Caltrans notified ten tribal representatives identified by the NAHC by mail, email, and telephone on January 17, 2020. A total of four responses were received:

- On January 30, 2020, Patrick Tumamait of Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, informed Caltrans that he was not unaware of any archaeological sites within the project's APE, and therefore, he did not have any concerns for the project.
- On January 30, 2020, Eleanor Arrellanes of Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians deferred consultation to Julie Tumamait-Stenslie. Caltrans contacted Chairperson Tumamait-Stenslie by mail, email, and telephone, and has not yet received a response.
- On January 30, 2020, Mona Tucker informed Caltrans that the project area is not in their ancestral territory.
- On March 2020, Susan Arakawa responded on behalf of Kenneth Kahn of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians stating that the Elders Council requests no further consultation at this time.

### **Local Government/Historic Societies and Groups/Agency Consultation**

Caltrans contacted the Ventura County Planning Division and the County of Ventura Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) by letter on February 7, 2020.

- Dillan Murray, Assistant Planner, responded on behalf of the CHB stating that no known paleontological or archaeological resources are located on or near the site. In addition, no listed or known historic resources eligible for listing are located on or near the site. However, he stated that the area could have high sensitivity for tribal cultural resources and recommended outreach with Native American tribes. He also stated that the State Route (SR) 33 is a scenic highway and recommended consulting the Planning Division for guidance on permitting requirements related to protected trees. He also requested a copy of the final technical reports. Caltrans provided a response via U.S. mail to the CHB on March 4, 2020 outlining the Native American outreach to date and the acknowledgement of the information received. Caltrans will forward copies of the final cultural resource technical reports to the CHB when the studies are completed.

In addition, Caltrans have also contacted four local historical society/historic preservation group representatives via letters. Two responses were received:

- The San Buenaventura Conservancy stated that it has no comments on the project.
- The Historic Bridge Foundation requested additional information on the location of the project. Additional information was provided to the Historic Bridge Foundation, and

subsequently, they concluded that they do not know enough about the project to comment, because they have not been to the project site.

Caltrans also consulted with the USFS-Los Padres National Forest archaeologist, Steven Galbraith through a call and email on December 19, 2019.

- Galbraith responded to Caltrans' phone call on December 20, 2019, and concurred that based on the location, slope cut, and geology, an Archaeological Survey Report was not necessary, and he did not have concerns for the project area.

The Los Padres Forest Association was also contacted through U.S. mail on February 7, 2020. A follow-up email was sent on February 26, 2020.

- Bryan Conant, Director of the Los Padres Forest Association, responded that they do not have any concerns related to cultural resources but are concerned about the potential closures and delays associated with construction. They recommended that construction be limited to weekdays, if possible.

#### **State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Consultation**

A Section 106 consultation letter was sent to SHPO on March 24, 2020, regarding findings for SR 33's ineligibility to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. SHPO concurred on April 30, 2020 and the correspondence is documented on Appendix E – Required Consultation/Concurrence Documentation.

#### **Federal Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary**

On February 26, 2020, Caltrans sent a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on requesting concurrence that the project "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" California-red legged frog. Caltrans received a concurrence letter from the USFWS on March 26, 2020. The proposed project was subsequently down-scoped from an eight to ten-foot widening to a four-foot-nine-inch-widening/two-foot-nine-inch-widening as described in Section 1.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion. The updated scope will have minor or negligible impacts on California red-legged frog and thus, Caltrans has determined that the project will have no effect on California red-legged frog.

On February 14, 2020, Caltrans sent a letter to the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) requesting concurrence that the project "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" southern steelhead trout and its critical habitat. After an update in project scope as described above, Caltrans sent another letter to request concurrence that the project "May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect" on the southern steelhead trout and "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" its critical habitat. The consultation letter is attached to Appendix E – Required Consultation/Concurrence Documentation.

## Chapter 5 – List of Preparers

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The following Caltrans District 7 staff contributed to the preparation of this environmental document.

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### **Division of Design**

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Mohamed H. Ghannoum, Project Engineer  
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## Chapter 6 – Distribution List

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Distribution list begins on the next page.

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## Chapter 7 – List of Studies and Technical Reports

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Geotechnical Design Report, November 2019

Biological Assessment (BA) for southern steelhead trout and critical habitat, February 2020

Natural Environment Study (NES), March 2020

Area of Potential Effects (APE) Map, March 2020

Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR), March 2020

Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER), March 2020

Air Quality Memorandum, May 2020

Visual Impact Assessment Memorandum, May 2020

Hazardous Waste Assessment, June 2020

NES Addendum, June 2020

Traffic and Collision Analysis, June 2020

BA Addendum for southern steelhead trout and critical habitat, August 2020

Stormwater Data Report, September 2020

The associated studies and technical reports are available upon request.

# Appendix A – Title VI Policy Statement

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

November 2019

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 324-8379 or visit the following web page:  
<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/business-and-economic-opportunity/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Business and Economic Opportunity, at 1823 14<sup>th</sup> Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at [Title.VI@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Toks Omishakin'.

Toks Omishakin  
Director

## Appendix B – List of Acronyms

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This list contains the most common acronyms and abbreviations found on the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference.

AADT: average annual daily traffic ACHP: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act ADL: aerially deposited lead ADT: average daily traffic AE: Adverse Effect AEP: Associate Environmental Planner AEPNS: Associate Environmental Planner, Natural Science AHERA: Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act AIRFA: American Indian Religious Freedom Act APCD: Air Pollution Control District APE: Area of Potential Effects AQMD: Air Quality Management District ARB: Air Resources Board ARPA: Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 ASR: Archaeological Survey Report ASTM: American Society for Testing Materials

BA: Biological Assessment BIA: Bureau of Indian Affairs BLM: Bureau of Land Management BMP: Best Management Practice BO: Biological Opinion

CAA: Clean Air Act Cal/EPA: California Environmental Protection Agency Cal/OSHA: California Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration CalRecycle: California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery CCAA: California Clean Air Act CCC: California Conservation Corps CCC: California Coastal Commission

CCMP: California Coastal Management Program CCO: Contract Change Order CCR: California Code of Regulations CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDFW: California Department of Fish and Wildlife CDP: Coastal Development Permit CE: Categorical Exclusion (NEPA) or Categorical Exemption (CEQA) CEQ: Council on Environmental Quality CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act CERES: California Environmental Resources Evaluation System CERLA: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act CESA: California Endangered Species Act CFR: Code of Federal Regulations CGS: California Geological Survey CHP: California Highway Patrol CHRIS: California Historical Resources Information System CIA: Community Impact Assessment CIDH: cast-in-drilled-hole CL: center line CNDDDB: California Natural Diversity Database CNPS: California Native Plant Society CO: carbon monoxide CO<sub>2</sub>: carbon dioxide COG: Council of Governments

CPRA: California Public Records Act CRHR: California Register of Historical Resources CRM: Cultural Resources Management CSO: Cultural Studies Office CT: California Department of Transportation CTC: California Transportation Commission CTP: California Transportation Plan CWA: Clean Water Act CZM: Coastal Zone Management CZMA: Coastal Zone Management Act

dBA: A-weighted decibel dBA Leq: A-weighted noise level DBH: Diameter at breast height DEA: Division of Environmental Analysis DED: draft environmental document DEIR: Draft Environmental Impact Report (CEQA) DEIS: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (NEPA) DES-OE: Division of Engineering Services-Office Engineer DLAE: District Local Assistance Engineer

DNAC: District Native American Coordinator DOC: California Department of Conservation DOD: Department of Defense [U.S.] DOI: Department of the Interior [U.S.] DOT: Department of Transportation [general] DPR: Draft Project Report C DPR: California Department of Parks and Recreation DRP: Data Recovery Plan DSA: Disturbed Soil Area DSI: Detailed Site Investigation DTSC: California Department of Toxic Substances Control DWR: California Department of Water Resources

EA: Environmental Assessment [NEPA] EA: Expenditure Authorization EBC: Environmental Branch Chief ECL: Environmental Construction Liaison/Coordinator ECR: Environmental Commitments Record ED: environmental document EFH: Essential Fish Habitat EH: Environmental Handbook EIR: Environmental Impact Report [CEQA] EIS: Environmental Impact Statement [NEPA] EJ: Environmental Justice

ELAP: Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program EMO: Environmental Management Office EO: Executive Order EOC: Environmental Office Chief EP: Environmental Planner EPNS: Environmental Planner (Natural Science) ESA: Environmentally Sensitive Area ESA: Endangered Species Act ESR: Environmental Study Request ESU: Environmentally Significant Unit (relates to salmonids)

FAE: Finding of Adverse Effect FED: final environmental document FEIR: Final Environmental Impact Report (CEQA) FEIS: Final Environmental Impact Statement (NEPA) FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency FESA: Federal Endangered Species Act FHWA: Federal Highway Administration FIFRA: Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act FNAE: Finding of No Adverse Effect FOE: Finding of Effect FOIA: Freedom of Information Act

FONSI: Finding of No Significant Impact [NEPA] FPPA: Farmland Protection Policy Act FR: Federal Register FRA: Federal Railroad Administration FTA: Federal Transit Authority FSTIP: Federal State Transportation Improvement Program FTIP: Federal Transportation Improvement Program FY: Fiscal Year

GHG: greenhouse gas GIS: Geographic Information Systems GPR: Ground Penetrating Radar GPS: Global Positioning System

HA: Highway Agency HABS: Historic American Building Survey HAER: Historic American Engineering Record HASR: Historic Architectural Survey Report HCM: Highway Capacity Manual HCP: Habitat Conservation Plan HDM: Highway Design Manual HGM: Hydrogeomorphic Method HMDD-A: Hazardous Materials Disclosure Document-Acquisition HMDD-D: Hazardous Materials Disclosure Document-Disposal HOT: High-Occupancy Toll HOV: High-Occupancy Vehicle HPSR: Historic Property Survey Report HRC: Heritage Resources Coordinator HRER: Historical Resources Compliance Report HRER: Historical Resources Evaluation Report HSWA: Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments

IGR: Intergovernmental Review IIP: Interregional Improvement Program IP: Individual Permit IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IS: Initial Study [CEQA] ISA: Initial Site

Assessment ISTE: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 ITE: Institute of Transportation Engineers ITIP: Interregional Transportation Improvement Program ITP: Incidental Take Permit ITSP: Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan ITTE: Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering

JD: Jurisdictional Determination

MBTA: Migratory Bird Treaty Act MLD: Most Likely Descendant MMPA: Marine Mammal Protection Act MMRR: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Record MND: Mitigated Negative Declaration [CEQA] MOA: Memorandum of Agreement MOU: Memorandum of Understanding MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization MPRSA: Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act MS4: Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System MSAT: Mobile Source Air Toxics MSFCMA: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act MSL: Mean Sea Level MTBE: methyl tertiary butyl ether MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan MTIP: Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program

NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards NAC: Noise Abatement Criteria NADR: Noise Abatement Decision Report NAE: No Adverse Effect NAGPRA: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 NAHC: Native American Heritage Commission ND: Negative Declaration [CEQA] NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act NES: Natural Environment Study NES-MI: Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impact) NESHAP: National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants NFIP: National Flood Insurance Program NFSAM: National Flood Security Act Manual NH3: ammonia NHL: National Historic Landmark NHPA: National Historic Preservation Act NHS: National Highway System NNL: National Natural Landmark NOA: naturally occurring asbestos NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA-Fisheries: National Marine Fisheries Service NOC: Notice of Completion NOD: Notice of Determination NOE: Notice of Exemption NOI: Notice of Intent NOP: Notice of Preparation NOx: nitrogen oxide NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System NPL: National Priorities List

NPS: National Park Service NR: National Register [of Historic Places] NRCS: National Resources Conservation Service NRHP: National Register of Historic Places NSSP: Nonstandard Special Provision NWP: Nationwide Permit

O.C.: Overcrossing OCRM: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management OHP: [California] Office of Historic Preservation OHWM: Ordinary High Water Mark OPR: [California] Office of Planning and Research OSHA: Occupational Safety Hazard Administration

PA: Programmatic Agreement PA&ED: Project Approval and Environmental Document PAM: Permits, Agreements, and Mitigation Pb: lead PDPM: [Caltrans] Project Development Procedures Manual PDT: Project Development Team PE: Project Engineer PEAR: Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report PEER: Permit Engineering Evaluation Report PER: Paleontological Evaluation Report PG: Professional Geologist PID: Project Initiation Document PIR: Paleontological

Identification Report PLAC: Permits, Licenses, Agreements, and Certifications PM: particulate matter PM: post mile PM: Project Manager PM10: particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter PM2.5: particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter PMP: Paleontological Mitigation Plan PMR: Paleontological Mitigation Report POAQC: Project of Air Quality Concern ppb: parts per billion ppm: parts per million PR: Project Report PRC: [California] Public Resources Code PS&E: Plans, Specifications, and Estimates PSI: Preliminary Site Investigation PSI: pounds per square inch PSR: Project Study Report PSR-PDS: Project Study Report-Project Development Support PSS: Paleontological Stewardship Summary PSSR: Project Scope Summary Report PUC: Public Utilities Commission [California]

RAP: Relocation Assistance Program RAW: Remedial Action Workplan RCR: Route Concept Report RCRA: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 RE: Resident Engineer RGL: Regulatory Guidance Letter RIP: Regional Improvement Program ROD: Record of Decision [NEPA] ROW: right-of-way RP: Responsible Party RTIP: Regional Transportation Improvement Program RTP: Regional Transportation Plan RTPA: Regional Transportation Planning Agency RWQCB: Regional Water Quality Control Board

SACOG: Sacramento Area of Council of Governments SAFETEA-LU: Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users SANDAG: San Diego Association of Governments

SARA: Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act SB: Senate Bill SCAG: Southern California Association of Governments SCH: [California] State Clearinghouse SDWA: Safe Drinking Water Act SEE: social, economic, and environmental SEP: Senior Environmental Planner SER: Standard Environmental Reference SFHA: Special Flood Hazard Area SHA: State Highway Agency SHSB: State Historical Building Safety Board SHL: State Historical Landmark SHOPP: State Highway Operation and Protection Program SHPO: State Historic Preservation Officer SHS: State Highway System SI: Safety Index SIP: State Implementation Plan SLC: [California] State Lands Commission SMARA: Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 SOC: Statement of Overriding Considerations [CEQA] SOL: Statute of Limitations SR: State Route SSP: Standard Special Provision STIP: Statewide Transportation Improvement Program SWMP: Storm Water Management Plan SWPPP: Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan SWRCB: State Water Resources Control Board

TAC: Technical Advisory Committee TASAS: Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System TCM: Transportation Control Measure TCP: Traditional Cultural Property or Place TCR: Transportation Concept Report TDM: Transportation Demand Management THPO: Tribal Historic Preservation Officer TIP: Transportation Improvement Program TMDL: Total Maximum Daily Load TMP: Traffic Management Plan TP: Transportation Planner TRB: Transportation Research Board TRPA: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency TSM: Transportation Systems Management

U.C.: Undercrossing U.S.: United States U.S. EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency USACE: United States Army Corps of Engineers USC: United States Code USCG: United States

Coast Guard USDA: United States Department of Agriculture USDOT: United States Department of Transportation USFS: United States Forest Service USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service USGS: United States Geological Survey UST: underground storage tanks

V/C: Volume/Capacity VMT: Vehicle Miles of Travel VOC: volatile organic compounds

## Appendix C – Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

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In order to be sure that all of the environmental measures identified in this document are executed at the appropriate times, the following mitigation program (as articulated on the proposed Environmental Commitments Record [ECR] which follows) would be implemented. During project design, avoidance, minimization, and /or mitigation measures will be incorporated into the project's final plans, specifications, and cost estimates, as appropriate. All permits will be obtained prior to implementation of the project. During construction, environmental and construction/engineering staff will ensure that the commitments contained in this ECR are fulfilled. Following construction and appropriate phases of project delivery, long-term mitigation maintenance and monitoring will take place, as applicable. As the following ECR is a draft, some fields have not been completed, and will be filled out as each of the measures is implemented. Note: Some measures may apply to more than one resource area. Duplicative or redundant measures have not been included in this ECR.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures	Commitment Source	Implementing Phase	Responsible Party	CEQA Mitigation
<b>UTILITIES</b>				
<b>U-1:</b> Should the scope of work change to require utility relocation, coordination with utility owners will be conducted to reduce impacts to utilities.	Environmental Document	PS&E, Before RTL	Project Engineer	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
<b>T-1:</b> A Traffic Management Plan will be established during the design phase of the project. This will include public information, motorists information, incident management, construction strategies, etc. The TMP will also maintain travel in both directions and minimize traffic delays and idling that can produce GHGs.	Environmental Document	PS&E, Before RTL	Project Engineer/ Traffic Management	
<b>T-2:</b> Caltrans will coordinate with Media Affairs and local agencies at the earliest possible before construction to ensure impacts to travelers using the route will be minimized, as much as feasible.	Environmental Document	PS&E, Before Construction	Public Information Officer	

<p><b>T-3:</b> Full roadway closures will require portable changeable messaging signs (PCMs) at various locations to alert motorists in advance of construction and during construction. PCMs are required to be installed 14 days in advance of closures.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>T-4:</b> The Public Information Officer will implement an intensive Public Awareness Campaign to minimize impacts to the travelling public.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Before Construction/ Construction</p>	<p>Public Information Officer</p>	
<p><b>T-5:</b> Emergency access will be maintained for emergency personnel even during full roadway closures. California Highway Patrol (CHP) would be on-site during the 55-hr closures and will coordinate with the Resident Engineer for any emergencies.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>T-6:</b> One lane will remain opened at all times to allow for public and emergency access, unless a full roadway closure is required. Portable traffic signals will be installed on both approaching ends for reversible traffic control. Pilot cars may be used to guide motorists and bicyclists through construction zone.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer/Traffic Management</p>	

VISUAL/AESTHETICS				
<b>V-1:</b> Erosion control measures are to be applied to all disturbed slopes. If seeds are to be used to revegetate the slope, native plant materials and seed species will be determined by Caltrans Landscape Architects and U.S. Forest Service plant resource specialists.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>V-2:</b> All metal beam guardrail, walls, and barriers, are to be similar to and visually compatible with existing structures along the route.	Environmental Document	PA&ED	Project Engineer/Landscape Architect	
<b>V-3:</b> The material, color and texture for all concrete works are to match or blend into the surrounding environment, i.e. existing barriers, wall, or rock slope.	Environmental Document	PA&ED	Project Engineer	
<b>V-4:</b> Concrete wall or barrier will be stamped with a pattern to match or complement existing rock shape or form. The concrete will be stained with earth tone colors to complement surrounding rock/soil color.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>V-5:</b> Metallic surfaces are to be colored or treated with oxidizing agent to appear aged and non-reflective.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

<p><b>C-1:</b> If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Environmental Document</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Construction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Resident Engineer/ Cultural Specialist</p>	
<p><b>C-2:</b> If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety Code (H&amp;SC) Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner contacted. If the remains are thought by the coroner to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), who, pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98, will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). At this time, the person who discovered the remains will contact the District Cultural Branch Chief so that they may work with the MLD on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Environmental Document</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Construction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Resident Engineer/ Cultural Specialist</p>	

WATER QUALITY				
<b>WQ-1:</b> A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) or Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) prepared for the project to minimize construction debris and discharge into the waterways.	Environmental Document	PS&E, During Construction	Project Engineer/ Resident Engineer	
<b>WQ-2:</b> All permit conditions laid forth in the NPDES General Permit for Discharges and the 401 Permit will be implemented.	Environmental Document	PS&E, During Construction	Project Engineer/ Resident Engineer	
GEOLOGY				
<b>GEO-1:</b> A drainage system at the bottom of the slope is recommended to collect water and divert it from the roadway to the existing creek.	Environmental Document	PS&E, During Construction	Project Engineer/ Resident Engineer	

HAZARDOUS WASTE				
<p><b>HAZ-1:</b> ADL contaminated soils must be managed under the ADL Soil Management Agreement between Caltrans and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control that took effect on July 1, 2016. A site investigation of ADL will be conducted during the design phase. Based on the soil test results, the Office of Environmental Engineering (OEE) will provide the soil classifications and engineering special provisions for the management of excavated soil. The contractor will be required to prepare a Lead Compliance Plan and Work Plan for the management, transport, and disposal of ADL soil, and the removal of yellow and white strip and pavement marking.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>PS&amp;E, Before RTL &amp; Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer/ Environmental Engineering</p>	
<p><b>HAZ-2:</b> The OEE will provide engineering special provisions for the removal of yellow and white traffic stripe. The Contractor will be required to prepare a Lead Compliance Plan and a Work Plan for the management of yellow and white traffic stripes removal, which will be removed and approved by the OEE. Residue produced from the removal of the yellow thermoplastic stripe and pavement marking are considered non-RCRA (California) Hazardous Waste and must be properly collected, stored, tested, transported, and disposed of in accordance with State and Federal regulations.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>HAZ-3:</b> A site investigation of aerially deposited lead (ADL) will be necessary during the design phase to obtain site specific soil data required for disposal of the excavated soil.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>PS&amp;E</p>	<p>Project Engineer/ Environmental Engineering</p>	
<p><b>HAZ-4:</b> All treated wood waste must be managed as hazardous waste and disposed of at a facility permitted in California to accept treated wood waste in compliance with Title 22 California Code of Regulations.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>HAZ-5:</b> An Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) survey must be implemented prior to the demolition or renovation of the structures to ensure protective measures are taken for human health and the environment. If asbestos is detected, the appropriate non-standard provisions will be provided to require the contractor to prepare an Asbestos Compliance Plan for the protection of workers and a Work Plan for special handling, protection of the creek, and proper disposal of the ACM. Notification to the local Air Pollution Control District is required at least 15 days prior to demolition or renovation of a structure whether it contains asbestos or not.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>PS&amp;E, Before RTL</p>	<p>Project Engineer/ Hazardous Waste Specialist</p>	

<p><b>HAZ-6:</b> An asbestos survey by a Certified Asbestos Consultant is required to determine if asbestos shims were present. Upon the completion of the ACM survey, if asbestos shims detected, OEE will provide the appropriate special provisions for the removal of the asbestos shims concerning special handling, containerization, labeling, transport, and disposal during the removal of MBGR.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>PS&amp;E, Before RTL</p>	<p>Project Engineer/ Environmental Engineering</p>	
<p><b>HAZ-7:</b> Hazardous waste issues will be revisited during design phase as more details of the work will be developed.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>PS&amp;E</p>	<p>Environmental Engineering</p>	
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>				
<p><b>BIO-1:</b> Caltrans will implement its standard best management practices for stormwater pollution prevention.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-2:</b> Caltrans will mitigate the loss of riparian habitat by replanting species on-site on the hillside after construction and in the biological study area outside of the project impact area within North Fork Matilija Creek.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Post-Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	<p>YES</p>

<p><b>BIO-3:</b> Caltrans will minimize the removal and trimming of riparian vegetation to the extent feasible. A certified arborist will be present to monitor tree trimming during all project activities. Trees that require catastrophic trimming will have their location, species, and physical conditions recorded, which will inform the restoration effort. Stumps will be left in place in the permanent impact area to maintain the integrity of the soil in which the trees are supporting and will have the opportunity to resprout in place.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-4:</b> The project biologist will be present full-time during the project activities within or adjacent to the stream. The biologist will monitor the removal of vegetation and quantify impacts to inform the compensatory mitigation for this project. The biologist will monitor the project for the compliance of legal requirements and permit conditions and the implementation of the project’s conservation measures.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-5:</b> Caltrans will avoid performing road demolition, ground disturbance, and activities in North Fork Matilija Creek during bank-full flow events.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>BIO-6:</b> A qualified biologist will present information to the construction staff, who are on the site for longer than 30 minutes. All construction staff will be required to receive the program. The program will inform the construction staff the species that are likely to occur in the project area, the project’s conservation measures, and the procedures for preventing and minimizing environmental impacts.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-7:</b> Caltrans will specify that North Fork Matilija Creek and riparian vegetation outside of the proposed project impact area is an environmentally sensitive area. The construction staff will be made aware of the work boundaries. Fencing or signage will be placed at the edge of the project impact area to remind construction staff of the limits of disturbance.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-8:</b> Caltrans will minimize the direct impacts to jurisdictional waters, riparian resources and the vertical seep, to the extent feasible.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-9:</b> Project equipment that shall be used for ground disturbance or vegetation removal will be washed of invasive plant materials and vectors prior to entering the Los Padres National Forest and Biological Study Area.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>BIO-10:</b> The Ojai fritillary will be protected during Education Program, reminding workers that they must avoid impacts to the vertical seep, which could undercut the Fritillary population.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-11:</b> A biologist will perform nesting bird surveys no earlier than three days before initiation of vegetation removal, if it is scheduled during the nesting bird season. If nesting birds are observed within vegetation to be removed or habitat to be disturbed, then the project will avoid removing that vegetation until the nestlings have fledged. If there is a pause or lapse in construction for longer than three days, then a biologist will have to perform a repeat nesting bird survey prior to further vegetation removal during the nesting bird season.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Pre- construction/ Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-12:</b> A qualified ornithologist will monitor the project during vegetation removal, roadway demolition and other noise generating activities. The monitor will survey nesting birds in the BSA (if any have been identified during surveys or monitoring), and detect whether they are being disturbed by project activities. If the monitor observes nesting disturbance caused by the project then construction will have to be paused within 150 feet of the project activities until the nestlings have fledged.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>BIO-13:</b> Road demolition within 150 feet of the bridge will be scheduled during the night. A qualified bat project monitor will watch the bats while road demolition occurs. By scheduling this activity during the night, the project will reduce the effects of noise and vibration on the bats, because any bats that would flee the roost at night would do so at a time when they are less vulnerable to predators, such as hawks.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-14:</b> A qualified bat biologist will monitor construction activities performed within 150 feet of the bridge and watch to see whether the bats are stressed by project activities. When the bats are observed to be stressed, the monitor will interrupt activities and the project will have to pause work within the area near the bat colony until Caltrans has conducted consultation with CDFW. If the monitor finds a dead bat in the BSA, then the monitor will inform the Caltrans biologist who will inform CDFW and if necessary consultation will be re-initiated.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist</p>	
<p><b>BIO-15:</b> Caltrans will use the minimum lighting feasible to perform night work. The bat biologist will monitor the positioning and use of lighting to ensure that light is not unnecessarily shone upon the bridge and the riparian vegetation adjacent to the bat colony.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>BIO-16:</b> Caltrans will perform pre-construction surveys for tree roosting bats in riparian trees prior to their removal. If the trees are found to have tree roosting bats, then those trees will be removed during the night when bats are no longer present.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist</p>	
<p><b>BIO-17:</b> Caltrans will remove and trim riparian trees in a staged fashion during the bat maternity season evidenced by pre-tree-removal surveys. First limbs of the trees will be removed, and the remainder of the tree will be left in place over night. Leaving the tree overnight allows tree roosting bats to leave tree cavities. After the bats have left the trunk of the tree, the trunk will be removed and tree removal will be complete.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-18:</b> Caltrans will implement pre-construction surveys for southwestern pond turtle and two-striped garter snake prior to disturbing land or vegetation within or adjacent to suitable habitat for these species.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>BIO-19:</b> A qualified herpetologist will monitor the project for the presence of the turtle and garter snake throughout project activities taking place within or above suitable habitat for these species. The biologist will monitor the status of exclusion measures and other conservation measures to prevent the project from affecting individuals directly.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-20:</b> Caltrans will mitigate the disturbance of the North Fork Matilija Creek streambanks by removing all temporary fills and recontouring the hillside after construction.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Post-Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-21:</b> Caltrans will not perform work in the creek during steelhead migration season, November 1 to May 31.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-22:</b> Caltrans will install a containment system on the temporary scaffold and will have light equipment staged on the roadway, such as vacuums and spill kits, ready to contain and remove spills from the project area.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

<p><b>BIO-23:</b> Prior to the beginning of construction, a qualified ichthyologist will survey the creek next to the project impact area and the reaches of the creek upstream and downstream of the project impact area. The biologist will implement the fish capture and relocation plan, which would exclude fish from the project area temporarily and relocate them to suitable habitat in North Fork Matilija Creek nearby. If more fish are present in the project area than originally anticipated or more fish mortalities occur than have been authorized by NMFS during the implementation of the plan, then Caltrans will pause the capture fish and relocation and re- initiate consultation with NMFS. If arroyo chub are found in the creek, then Caltrans will initiate consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Cut tree trunks will also be carefully placed in the North Fork Matilija Creek to provide refugia for steelhead trout and replicate natural turnover of riparian vegetation in the creek.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Before Construction/ Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
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<p><b>BIO-24:</b> The qualified ichthyologist will be present during project activities in the creek to observe and record the project’s compliance with conservation measures and observe whether southern steelhead or other special-status species have entered the project impact area after exclusion has been performed. The monitor will have the authority to pause construction in the creek if trout is encountered during construction. Caltrans will re-initiate consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service if the monitor observes that the project is trending towards exceeding the authorized take amount.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-25:</b> The project biologist and resident engineer will meet prior to the beginning of construction to review the project’s disturbance area and coordinate means to minimize the disturbance of the existing environment and minimize vegetation trimming to the extent feasible.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Before Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>BIO-26:</b> If any boulders are shifted by the project, they shall be re-oriented to their pre-project position, to keep trout refugia. Disturbance to the creek banks above the water level will be recontoured and stabilized to prevent future erosion. Professional photos of the work area will be taken prior to construction to ensure all objects are re-oriented back to the pre-project positions.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction/ After Construction</p>	<p>Biologist/ Resident Engineer</p>	

CLIMATE CHANGE				
<b>GHG-1:</b> Idling is limited to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>GHG-2:</b> Schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>GHG-3:</b> Reduce construction waste by re-using or recycling construction and demolition waste.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>GHG-4:</b> Use recycled for construction to reduce construction water consumption of potable water.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>GHG-5:</b> Maintain equipment in proper working condition, using the right size equipment for the job, and use equipment with new technologies to improve fuel efficiency.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	
<b>GHG-6:</b> Provide construction personnel with the knowledge to identify environmental issues and best practice methods to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment. Supplement existing trainings with information regarding methods to reduce GHG emissions related to construction.	Environmental Document	Construction	Resident Engineer	

<p><b>GHG-7:</b> The contractor must balance cut and fill quantities to reduce the need for transport of earthen materials.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>				
<p><b>AQ-1:</b> The proposed project must comply with VCAPCD Fugitive Dust Implementation Rule 55 to minimize temporary emissions during construction the project as applicable and appropriate.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>AQ-2:</b> VCAPCD Rule 74.2 (Architectural Coating) limits the amount of VOC emissions from paving, asphalt, concrete curing, and cement coatings operations. Construction of the proposed project shall comply with all applicable APCD Rules.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	
<p><b>AQ-3:</b> While construction equipment on site would generate objectionable odors primarily arising from diesel exhaust, these emissions would generally be minimized by conducting certain construction activities in areas at least 500 feet from the sensitive receptors as feasible.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	

NOISE				
<p><b>N-1:</b> Construction will comply with Section 14-8.02, Noise Control. These requirements state that noise levels generated during construction shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.</p>	<p>Environmental Document</p>	<p>Construction</p>	<p>Resident Engineer</p>	

## Appendix D – Cooperating Agencies Documentation

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The following letters were sent out during the scoping process to inviting agencies to be a cooperating agency to the project.

The following letters/concurrence documentations are included as a part of this appendix:

- a) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Invite to be Cooperating Agency Letter and Acceptance
- b) U.S. Forest Service Invite to be Cooperating Agency Letter

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 7  
100 S. MAIN STREET, SUITE 100  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012  
PHONE (213) 897-0362  
FAX (213) 897-0360  
TTY 711  
www.dot.ca.gov



Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

March 10, 2020

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District  
Attn: CESPL-CO-R  
915 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1101  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

**Subject: Invitation to Become a Cooperating Agency on the State Route 33 (SR-33)**

Caltrans has initiated studies to prepare an Environmental Assessment for the proposed Road Safety Enhancement Project on SR-33 in unincorporated Ventura County from post-mile (PM) 18.88 to PM 19.04. The proposed project will construct cantilever slabs four to eight feet on the southbound direction, upgrade the rock block barrier, place a high friction surface treatment on the pavement, and install tubular handrailing and road signs. The purpose of the project is to enhance roadway safety and to reduce collisions to the rock barrier. It is anticipated that the project will provide better sight distance, enhance protection and reduce run-off road collisions for travelers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Caltrans distributed a Notice of Initiation of Studies (dated December 11, 2019) to elected officials, agencies, organizations, and interested individuals, which summarized the proposed undertaking, and solicited comments until January 30, 2020. The Notice of Initiation of Studies communicated that a determination was made to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) leading to a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

During the study, Caltrans will work closely with the public and local agencies to ensure that all pertinent factors and viable alternatives are considered. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have concerning possible alternatives or potential social, economic, and environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

Based on the comments received and the current scope of the project, the alternatives under consideration are as follows:

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"*

**Alternative 1: No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative would maintain the existing configuration of SR-33 and no additional improvements will be made to the existing facility to reduce barrier collisions.

**Alternative 2: Construct Cantilever Slab**

Alternative 2 proposes to widen the curvature from PM 18.88 to PM 19.04 on the SR-33 in Ventura County by constructing a four to eight foot cantilever slab on the southbound direction of the roadway. The following peripheral improvements are also proposed with this build alternative:

- Upgrade rock block barrier with textured stamped concrete barrier
- Install tubular handrailing on top of concrete barrier
- Apply high friction surface treatment on the pavement
- Install roadway safety signs

The proposed project has a potential to affect environmental resources in the project study area in terms of cultural resources, hazardous waste/materials, biological resources and traffic.

You have the right to expect that the EA will enable you to discharge your jurisdictional responsibilities. Likewise, you have the obligation to tell us if, at any point in the process, your needs are not being met. We expect that at the end of the process the EA will satisfy your NEPA requirements including those related to project alternatives, environmental consequences, and mitigation. Further, we intend to utilize the EA and our subsequent Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) as our decision-making documents and as the basis for the permit application. We expect the permit application to proceed concurrently with the EA approval process.

In accordance with the Efficient Environmental Review Process codified at 23 USC 139, we are requesting your agency to be a cooperating agency because we believe that you agency will have an interest in this transportation project. Cooperating agencies are responsible for identifying, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for the project. We suggest your agency's role in the development of the above project should include the following as they relate to your area of expertise:

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1. Provide a meaningful and early input on defining the purpose and need, determining the range of alternatives to be considered, and the methodologies and level of detail required in the alternative analysis.
2. Participate in coordination meetings and joint field reviews as appropriate.
3. Provide timely review of early project information to reflect the views and concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and potential mitigation measures.

Under the Efficient Environmental Review Process, if your agency is a federal agency and declines to be a cooperating agency, your agency must do in writing by stating:

1. Your agency has no jurisdiction or authority;
2. Your agency has no expertise or information relevant to the project;  
and
3. Your agency does not intend to comment on the project.

We look forward to your response to our request for your agency to be a cooperating agency and to be working with you on this transportation project. The favor of a reply is requested by March 30, 2020. If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail about the project or our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities during the preparation of this EA, please contact me at (213) 897-0703.

Sincerely,



RONALD KOSINSKI

Deputy District Director, Environmental Planning, Caltrans District 7

Enclosure: Notice of Initiation of Studies for the Roadway Safety Enhancement Project and Map

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"*



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, LOS ANGELES DISTRICT  
60 SOUTH CALIFORNIA STREET, SUITE 201  
VENTURA, CA 93001-2538

March 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Invitation to Become Cooperating Agency on the State Route 33 Road Safety Enhancement Project (EA-033230) (Corps File No. SPL-2020-00206-TS)

Lillian Cai, Environmental Planner  
California Department of Transportation, District 7  
100 South Main St., Suite 100  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Cai:

This correspondence in response to your letter dated March 10, 2020, requesting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the "Corps") participation as a cooperating agency in the development of project-level Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed State Route 33 Road Safety Enhancement Project (the "Project"), from Post Mile 18.88 to 19.04 in Ventura County, California.

The Federal Highway Administration delegated its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") as well as consultation and coordination activities under other federal environmental laws to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The Corps understands that Caltrans will prepare a project-level EA in accordance with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. parts 1500-1508.

By this letter, the Corps hereby agrees to coordinate with Caltrans as a cooperating agency under 40 C.F.R. §§1501.6(b) and 1508.5, 33 C.F.R. part 325, Appendix B, paragraph 8(c), and 33 C.F.R. §230.16 to ensure that Caltrans' resulting EA may be adopted by the Corps for purposes of exercising our regulatory authorities under section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. §1344. Further, because of our section 404 of the CWA administrative responsibilities, we have particular concern in ensuring the project complies with the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines (40 C.F.R. part 230), which are fundamental to supporting our eventual determination of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) in any case in which a Corps standard individual permit is required. The Corps agrees to assist Caltrans in preparing the EA due to our jurisdiction by law for areas that could be affected by the Project and our special expertise in the following areas:

- a. Identifying and delineating aquatic resources;
- b. Corps' Regulatory Program regulations at 33 C.F.R. parts 320-332;

c. Compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's CWA § 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 C.F.R. part 230); and

d. Assessing the functions and services of aquatic resources and identifying appropriate methods to conduct such assessments.

Subject to availability of resources and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, the Corps agrees to:

a. Assist in identifying interest groups;

b. Attend coordination meetings and joint field reviews;

c. Raise concerns about any relevant technical studies that may be needed;

d. Assist in developing the range of alternatives, including the "practicability" of such alternatives and evaluation criteria;

e. Assist in identifying appropriate and practicable mitigation, including appropriate and practicable steps to first avoid and then minimize adverse impacts to aquatic resources, and then compensate for unavoidable adverse impacts/losses remaining after all appropriate and practicable minimization has been incorporated;

f. Identify issues, concerns, and any technical studies that the EA should address, including risk assessments for completed Corps projects, to support the Corps in fulfilling its NEPA or other responsibilities and any other requirements per CWA § 404;

g. Review administrative draft and administrative final EAs - Caltrans shall allow the Corps at least 30 days to review such documents; and

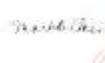
h. Cooperate in the application of principles for integration of NEPA and the CWA § 404 review processes. Specifically, if the project receives federal aid (funds) and would result in five or more acres of permanent impacts to waters of the U.S., Caltrans would need to ensure the environmental review process follows the procedures for coordination, checkpoint agreement responses, and dispute resolution set forth in the "NEPA and Clean Water Act Section 404 Integration Process for Federal Aid Surface Transportation Projects in California Memorandum of Understanding" (April 2006).

Furthermore, we are required to comply with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA; herein "Section 106") and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; herein "Section 7") for the federal action under evaluation. It is appropriate for Caltrans as the lead federal agency under NEPA to act as the lead federal agency for section

106 coordination and associated compliance requirements. Similarly, it is appropriate that Caltrans to be the lead federal action agency for purposes of section 7 consultation and associated compliance requirements. Based on this understanding, Caltrans will be responsible for complying with section 106 and section 7. When the CWA § 404 application is submitted, please provide the information in accordance with 33 CFR part 325, Appendix C, Procedures for the Protection of Historic Properties, including the April 25, 2005, Revised Interim Guidance for Implementing Appendix C of 33 CFR Part 325 with the Revised Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, so that we can review if the "Area of Potential Effect" or effects of the activity requiring DA authorization have been fully considered and evaluated for lead Federal agency consultation under section 106 of the NHPA. In accordance with 50 CFR part 402, Interagency Cooperation - Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, Final Rule (51 FR 19926, June 3, 1986), we request advanced coordination to ensure that the "action area" or effects of the activity requiring Corps' authorization have been fully considered and evaluated when consulting under section 7 of the ESA. At the time of your consultation, a brief statement regarding our designation of Caltrans as the lead federal agency, along with a copy of this letter, must be provided to the agencies to ensure compliance with section 7 of the ESA, and section 106 of the NHPA. These designations are limited to federalized impacts associated with the proposed project.

The Corps looks forward to continued dialogue and coordination with Caltrans on this project. If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Stevens, PhD at (805) 585-2146 or via e-mail at [theresa.stevens@usace.army.mil](mailto:theresa.stevens@usace.army.mil). Please refer to this letter and SPL-2020-00206-TS in your reply. Please help me to evaluate and improve the regulatory experience for others by completing the [customer survey](http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm_apex/f?p=regulatory_survey) form at [http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm\\_apex/f?p=regulatory\\_survey](http://corpsmapu.usace.army.mil/cm_apex/f?p=regulatory_survey).

Sincerely,

 Digitally signed by  
COHEN, MARK D. 123955  
8450  
Date: 2020.03.31  
09:33:11 -0700

Mark D. Cohen  
Deputy Chief, Regulatory Division

## Appendix E – Required Consultation/Concurrence Documentation

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The following required consultation/concurrence documentation is discussed in Chapter 4 Comments and Coordination, but the related correspondence documents are included here as an appendix to the document.

The following consultation/concurrence documentations are included as a part of this appendix:

- a) State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence on Eligibility Findings
- b) National Marine Fisheries Service Consultation Letter

State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence on Eligibility Findings

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 7, Division of Environmental Planning  
100 S. MAIN STREET, SUITE 100, MS 16A  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012  
PHONE (213) 897-9016  
FAX (213) 897-0685  
TTY 711  
www.dot.ca.gov



*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.*

March 24, 2020

Ms. Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Historic Preservation  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, CA 94296-001  
Attn: Section 106 Reviewer

RE: Historic Property Survey Report for State Route 33 Collision Severity Reduction Project in  
Los Padres National Forest, Ventura County  
07-VEN-33 PM 18.88/19.04 EFIS 0716000257 EA 33230

Dear Ms. Polanco:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), under the authority of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is initiating consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding the State Route 33 Collision Severity Reduction Project in Los Padres National Forest (EFIS 0716000257, EA 33230), Ventura County. This consultation is undertaken in accordance with the January 2014 *First Amended Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, As it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California* (hereafter, the *Section 106 PA*).

Attached for your concurrent review are the Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) and Historical Resource Evaluation Report (HRER) for the proposed undertaking. Under the *Section 106 PA*, Caltrans is responsible for ensuring the appropriateness of the APE (Stipulation VIII.A), the adequacy of historic property identification efforts (Stipulation VIII.B) and evaluation of properties for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The proposed undertaking is located at the curve area of State Route 33 (SR-33) from the north end of N. Fork Matilija Creek Bridge (bridge number 52 0441), north of Post Mile (PM) 18.88 to a point 500 feet north (south of PM 19.04) in Ventura County. The project site is located in the Wheeler Gorge area, in the Los Padres National Forest.

The project proposes to widen the roadway by eight feet by constructing a precast prestressed voided concrete slab supported on precast bent caps and cast-in-drilled-hole (CIDH) piles and concrete barrier cantilever moment slabs. The concrete barrier would be colored and textured to

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Ms. Julianne Polanco  
March 24, 2020  
page 2

match the existing surroundings. A tubular handrailing would be at the top of the concrete barrier. A high friction surface treatment would be placed on the pavement. Construction staging for the project would be located at PM 16.15, 2.73 miles south of the project location on a privately-owned vacant parcel. All physical construction work will be done within state right-of-way. However, the project is still within U.S. Forest Service jurisdiction and thus, a special permit will be required. See Attachment 2, HRER, Section I, for a more detailed project description. The complete project description can be found on page 1 of the project HPSR and HRER.

The proposed undertaking identification efforts resulted in one built environment property that required evaluation. It was determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Pursuant to Stipulation VIII.C.6 of the *Section 106 PA*, Caltrans requests your concurrence that those properties are determined not eligible for the National Register (6Y) or for designation as a California Historical Landmark:

Address	Community
State Route 33 (Between SRs 150 and 165, PM 11.28-68.49)	Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties

No archeological sites were identified within the project APE.

We look forward to receiving your response within 30 days of your receipt of this submittal, in accordance with Stipulation VIII.C.6.a of the 106 PA. Pending your concurrence regarding Caltrans' eligibility determinations, this letter serves as notification of our finding of "No Historic Properties Affected" (pursuant to Stipulation IX.A.2 of the *Section 106 PA*). If you concur with our eligibility determinations, this satisfies Caltrans' responsibilities under the 106 PA, and no further review will be required. In the event that you do not concur with Caltrans' determinations, further consultation will be carried out in accordance with Stipulation VIII.C.6.b. We are providing a concurrent copy of this documentation to the Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis Cultural Studies Office.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Francesca Smith at (213) 897-1947 or francesca.smith@dot.ca.gov. Thank you for your assistance with this undertaking.

Sincerely,



Claudia Harbert  
Heritage Resource Coordinator  
Caltrans, District 7  
Division of Environmental Planning, Cultural Resources Unit

enclosure: HPSR and HRER

cc: David Price, Caltrans HQ CSO

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to enhance California's economy and livability"*



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816-7100

Telephone: (916) 445-7000 FAX: (916) 445-7053  
calshpo.ohp@parks.ca.gov www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Director

April 30, 2020

VIA EMAIL

In reply refer to: FHWA\_2020\_0402\_001

Ms. Claudia Harbert, Heritage Resource Coordinator  
Division of Environmental Planning, Cultural Resources Unit  
Caltrans District 7  
100 S Main Street, Suite 100, MS 16A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Determination of Eligibility for the Proposed State Route 33 Collision Severity  
Reduction Project, Los Padres National Forest, Ventura County, CA

Dear Ms. Harbert:

Caltrans is initiating consultation regarding the above project in accordance with the January 1, 2014 *First Amended Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California (PA)*. Caltrans is also consulting in accordance with the Public Resources Code 5024 and pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding Between the California Department of Transportation and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Compliance with Public Resources Code 5024 and Governor's Executive Order W-26-92 (5024 MOU). As part of your documentation, Caltrans submitted a Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR), Historical Resources Evaluation Report (HRER), and Archaeological Field Review for the proposed project.

The proposed undertaking is located at the curve area of State Route 33 (SR-33) from the north end of N. Fork Matilija Creek Bridge (52 0441), north of PM 18.88 to a point 500 feet north (south of PM 19.04) in Ventura County. The project site is located in the Wheeler Gorge area, in the Los Padres National Forest. The project proposes to widen the roadway by eight feet by constructing a precast prestressed voided concrete slab supported on precast bent caps and cast-in-drilled-hole piles and concrete barrier cantilever moment slabs. The concrete barrier would be colored and textured to match existing surroundings. A tubular handrailing would be at the top of the concrete barrier. A high friction surface treatment would be placed on the pavement. Construction staging for the project would be located at PM 16.15, 2.73 miles south of the project

Ms. Harbert  
April 30, 2020  
Page 2 of 2

FHWA\_2020\_0402\_001

location on a privately-owned vacant parcel. All physical construction work will be done within state right-of-way. A complete project description are located on page 1 of the HPSR and HRER.

Pursuant to Stipulation VIII.C.6 of the PA, Caltrans determined that State Route 33 (between SRs 150 and 165, PM 11.28-68.49) is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Based on review of the submitted documentation, I concur.

If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Lindquist at (916) 445-7014 with e-mail at [natalie.lindquist@parks.ca.gov](mailto:natalie.lindquist@parks.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Julianne Polanco  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
100 SOUTH MAIN STREET, MS 16A  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012  
DIRECT (213) 326-0378



Help make conservation  
A California way of life!

August 19, 2020

Anthony Spina  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southern California Branch, California Coastal Office

SUBJECT: State Route 33 Curve Widening and Barrier Replacement Project in Wheeler Gorge, Request for Initiation of Formal Consultation under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act for the Southern Steelhead Trout and its Critical Habitat

Dear Mr. Spina,

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requests to initiate formal consultation for effects to southern steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) ("trout"), pursuant to the delegation of formal consultation responsibilities received from the Federal Highway Administration in accordance with 50 CFR § 402.08 (effective April 24, 2002), for the State Route 33 Curve Widening and Barrier Replacement Project (Project) in Wheeler Gorge, EA 33230. Caltrans had requested consultation initiation for this project before but did not have enough information. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closed that request on May 11, 2020. Since then, Caltrans has revised the scope for the project.

The revised scope for the project will widen the road for a lesser length of the highway and will widen the highway lanes by a lesser amount and affect the surrounding environment less. The project will no longer dewater/divert water in North Fork Matilija Creek. Instead, construction personnel will install temporary pedestrian platforms in and over the creek. The platforms will serve as surfaces to install water protection best management practices. There will still be no equipment in the creek. A fish biologist approved by NMFS will perform a fish exclusion and fish relocation effort prior to in-creek work to minimize the project's effects on trout.

Caltrans has amended its biological assessment and written a conceptual fish exclusion and relocation plan for your agency's review. Caltrans would like to initiate consultation for the determination that the project is like to adversely affect southern steelhead trout and Caltrans would like concurrence that that project is not likely to adversely affect trout critical habitat. If you have questions regarding this consultation request, please call me at 213-326-0378, or contact Caltrans biologist Mario Mariotta at (213) 269-1656.

Sincerely,

*Paul Caron*  
Paul Caron  
Senior Environmental Planner/District Biologist  
Caltrans District 7, Biological Capital Outlay Support

*"Caltrans improves mobility across California"*

# Appendix F – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Species List

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## United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Ventura Fish And Wildlife Office  
2493 Portola Road, Suite B  
Ventura, CA 93003-7726  
Phone: (805) 644-1766 Fax: (805) 644-3958



In Reply Refer To:

July 23, 2020

Consultation Code: 08EVEN00-2019-SLI-0330

Event Code: 08EVEN00-2020-E-01126

Project Name: 33230-SR-33 Road Widening, Barrier Installation, and High-friction Surface Treatment

Subject: Updated list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

### To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed list identifies species listed as threatened and endangered, species proposed for listing as threatened or endangered, designated and proposed critical habitat, and species that are candidates for listing that may occur within the boundary of the area you have indicated using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Information Planning and Conservation System (IPaC). The species list fulfills the requirements under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the species list should be verified after 90 days. We recommend that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists following the same process you used to receive the enclosed list. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any correspondence about the species list.

Due to staff shortages and excessive workload, we are unable to provide an official list more specific to your area. Numerous other sources of information are available for you to narrow the list to the habitats and conditions of the site in which you are interested. For example, we recommend conducting a biological site assessment or surveys for plants and animals that could help refine the list.

If a Federal agency is involved in the project, that agency has the responsibility to review its proposed activities and determine whether any listed species may be affected. If the project is a major construction project\*, the Federal agency has the responsibility to prepare a biological assessment to make a determination of the effects of the action on the listed species or critical habitat. If the Federal agency determines that a listed species or critical habitat is likely to be adversely affected, it should request, in writing through our office, formal consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act. Informal consultation may be used to exchange information and resolve

conflicts with respect to threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat prior to a written request for formal consultation. During this review process, the Federal agency may engage in planning efforts but may not make any irreversible commitment of resources. Such a commitment could constitute a violation of section 7(d) of the Act.

Federal agencies are required to confer with the Service, pursuant to section 7(a)(4) of the Act, when an agency action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat (50 CFR 402.10(a)). A request for formal conference must be in writing and should include the same information that would be provided for a request for formal consultation. Conferences can also include discussions between the Service and the Federal agency to identify and resolve potential conflicts between an action and proposed species or proposed critical habitat early in the decision-making process. The Service recommends ways to minimize or avoid adverse effects of the action. These recommendations are advisory because the jeopardy prohibition of section 7(a)(2) of the Act does not apply until the species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated. The conference process fulfills the need to inform Federal agencies of possible steps that an agency might take at an early stage to adjust its actions to avoid jeopardizing a proposed species.

When a proposed species or proposed critical habitat may be affected by an action, the lead Federal agency may elect to enter into formal conference with the Service even if the action is not likely to jeopardize or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. If the proposed species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated after completion of the conference, the Federal agency may ask the Service, in writing, to confirm the conference as a formal consultation. If the Service reviews the proposed action and finds that no significant changes in the action as planned or in the information used during the conference have occurred, the Service will confirm the conference as a formal consultation on the project and no further section 7 consultation will be necessary. Use of the formal conference process in this manner can prevent delays in the event the proposed species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated during project development or implementation.

Candidate species are those species presently under review by the Service for consideration for Federal listing. Candidate species should be considered in the planning process because they may become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. Preparation of a biological assessment, as described in section 7(c) of the Act, is not required for candidate species. If early evaluation of your project indicates that it is likely to affect a candidate species, you may wish to request technical assistance from this office.

Only listed species receive protection under the Act. However, sensitive species should be considered in the planning process in the event they become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. We recommend that you review information in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Diversity Data Base. You can contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at (916) 324-3812 for information on other sensitive species that may occur in this area.

[\*A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.]

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

## Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

**Ventura Fish And Wildlife Office**

2493 Portola Road, Suite B

Ventura, CA 93003-7726

(805) 644-1766

## Project Summary

Consultation Code: 08EVEN00-2019-SLI-0330

Event Code: 08EVEN00-2020-E-01126

Project Name: 33230-SR-33 Road Widening, Barrier Installation, and High-friction Surface Treatment

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: Caltrans proposes to widen highway SR-33 by constructing a cantilever concrete slab that will extend above the stream along this curve. After the road is widened, a barrier will be constructed along the edge of the lane. The pavement will receive a high friction surface treatment. The project will take place on along 337 feet of the highway. This project is expected to go into construction in late summer 2022 and it would take a year or less.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/34.5088420427204N119.27464368344175W>



Counties: Ventura, CA

## Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 9 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries<sup>1</sup>, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

### Birds

NAME	STATUS
California Condor <i>Gymnogyps californianus</i> Population: U.S.A. only, except where listed as an experimental population There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8193">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8193</a>	Endangered
Least Bell's Vireo <i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945</a>	Endangered
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749</a>	Endangered

## Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
Arroyo (=arroyo Southwestern) Toad <i>Anaxyrus californicus</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3762">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3762</a>	Endangered
California Red-legged Frog <i>Rana draytonii</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891</a>	Threatened

## Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
Riverside Fairy Shrimp <i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8148">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8148</a>	Endangered
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498</a>	Threatened

## Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
California Orcutt Grass <i>Orcuttia californica</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4923">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4923</a>	Endangered
Spreading Navarretia <i>Navarretia fossalis</i> There is <b>final</b> critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: <a href="https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1334">https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1334</a>	Threatened

## Critical habitats

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

# Appendix G – National Marine Fisheries Services Species List

The National Marine Fisheries Species List dated 2016 is attached below. Per email concurrence from Jess Adams of National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS), the attached species list is still valid for the project.

Quad Name **Wheeler Springs**  
 Quad Number **34119-E3**

### ESA Anadromous Fish

- SONCC Coho ESU (T) -
- CCC Coho ESU (E) -
- CC Chinook Salmon ESU (T) -
- CVSR Chinook Salmon ESU (T) -
- SRWR Chinook Salmon ESU (E) -
- NC Steelhead DPS (T) -
- CCC Steelhead DPS (T) -
- SCCC Steelhead DPS (T) -
- SC Steelhead DPS (E) - **X**
- CCV Steelhead DPS (T) -
- Eulachon (T) -
- ~~sDPS~~ Green Sturgeon (T) -

### ESA Anadromous Fish Critical Habitat

- SONCC Coho Critical Habitat -
- CCC Coho Critical Habitat -
- CC Chinook Salmon Critical Habitat -
- CVSR Chinook Salmon Critical Habitat -
- SRWR Chinook Salmon Critical Habitat -
- NC Steelhead Critical Habitat -
- CCC Steelhead Critical Habitat -
- SCCC Steelhead Critical Habitat -
- SC Steelhead Critical Habitat - **X**
- CCV Steelhead Critical Habitat -
- Eulachon Critical Habitat -
- ~~sDPS~~ Green Sturgeon Critical Habitat -

### ESA Marine Invertebrates

- Range Black Abalone (E) -
- Range White Abalone (E) -

### ESA Marine Invertebrates Critical Habitat

Black Abalone Critical Habitat -

### ESA Sea Turtles

- East Pacific Green Sea Turtle (T) -
- Olive Ridley Sea Turtle (T/E) -
- Leatherback Sea Turtle (E) -
- North Pacific Loggerhead Sea Turtle (E) -

### ESA Whales



- Blue Whale (E) -
- Fin Whale (E) -
- Humpback Whale (E) -
- Southern Resident Killer Whale (E) -
- North Pacific Right Whale (E) -
- Sei Whale (E) -
- Sperm Whale (E) -



### ESA Pinnipeds

- Guadalupe Fur Seal (T) -
- Steller Sea Lion Critical Habitat -

### Essential Fish Habitat

- Coho EFH -
- Chinook Salmon EFH -
- Groundfish EFH -
- Coastal Pelagics EFH -
- Highly Migratory Species EFH -

### MMPA Species (See list at left)

ESA and MMPA Cetaceans/Pinnipeds  
 See list at left and consult the NMFS Long Beach office  
 562-980-4000

- MMPA Cetaceans -
- MMPA Pinnipeds -

**From:** Jessica Adams - NOAA Federal <[jessica.adams@noaa.gov](mailto:jessica.adams@noaa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 4, 2020 3:21 PM  
**To:** Mariotta, Mario@DOT <[Mario.Mariotta@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Mario.Mariotta@dot.ca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Caltrans-NMFS consultations in future

**EXTERNAL EMAIL.** Links/attachments may not be safe.

Mario,

Yes, continue following the species list procedures on the archived website. The tool information was overlooked during the migration over to the new website. The new website is still a work in progress as many features did not transfer over correctly. The 2016 file on the website should be up to date. Status reviews are conducted every 5 years.

For phone numbers, I have finally been able to set up my office phone to properly forward to my home number so you should be able to get a hold of me normally in the future.

Thanks,  
Jess

**Jess Adams**  
*Fish Biologist, California Coastal Office*  
NOAA Fisheries | U.S. Department of Commerce  
Office: (562) 980-4013  
[www.fisheries.noaa.gov](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov)

## Appendix H – Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): No-Use Determinations

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Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 49 United States Code (USC) 303, declares that “it is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.”

This section of the document discusses parks, recreational facilities, wildlife refuges, and historic properties found within or next to the project area that do not trigger Section 4(f) protection because: 1) they are not publicly owned, 2) they are not open to the public, 3) they are not eligible historic properties, or 4) the project does not permanently use the property and does not hinder the preservation of the property.

Properties evaluated relative to the requirements of Section 4(f) are provided below. These properties are eligible for protection under Section 4(f). However, per 23 CFR 774, the properties do not meet the requirements found in the regulations. There are no “use” of these properties as defined by 23 CFR 774.17, and therefore, Section 4(f) does not apply.

### Properties protected by Section 4(f)

Name	Determination
Wheeler Gorge Campground	The property is a Section 4(f) property, but no “use” will occur. Therefore, the provisions of Section 4(f) does not apply.
Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center	The property is a Section 4(f) property, but no “use” will occur. Therefore, the provisions of Section 4(f) does not apply.