INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

THOUSAND PALMS CANYON ROAD WIDENING PROJECT

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Prepared for:

County of Riverside
3525 14th Street
Riverside California 92501

Prepared by:

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Riverside County Project: WO No. A7-0394

LSA

May 2021

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Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration Project Information

Project Proponent:	Riverside County Transportation Department 3525 14th Street Riverside, California 2501
Project Title:	Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project
Project Location:	This project is located along Thousand Palms Canyon Road from Ramon Road/Washington Street heading north to Dillon Road, totaling approximately 4.71 miles. This project is just to the east of the unincorporated community of Thousand Palms in Riverside County, California.
Project Description:	Thousand Palms Canyon Road is a north-south two-lane collector. Existing pavement width is approximately 22 feet wide with 11-foot through lanes and a 1-foot paved shoulder. A graded dirt shoulder of varying width bounded by dirt berms is located along both sides of the road. There is a half-mile segment of Thousand Palms Canyon Road adjacent to the Coachella Valley Preserve (Preserve) that is 32 feet wide, with 12-foot through lanes and 4-foot paved shoulders, with graded shoulders bounded by dirt berms. The entire area in the immediate vicinity is undeveloped. Most portions of Thousand Palms Canyon Road will be resurfaced by grinding existing pavement, mixing and compacting grindings with native soil, and overlaying the new base with new asphalt concrete. The new pavement width will be 34 feet wide, with two 12-foot through lanes and 5-foot paved shoulders. The half-mile segment of Thousand Palms Canyon Road adjacent to the Preserve will be widened by saw-cutting and removing existing pavement and sliver-paving a new section of asphalt feet on each side. A new right-turn pocket will be constructed at the Preserve entrance. A new left-turn pocket and driveway will be constructed approximately one half-mile north of the Preserve. Pavement width in the left-turn area will be 40 feet with two 10-foot through lanes, a 10-foot left-turn lane, and 5-foot paved shoulders.
Findings:	Pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of Riverside has determined that the proposed project would not have a significant effect of the environment. Following an Initial Study and assessment of possible adverse impacts, the proposed project was determined not to have a significant impact on the environment with the inclusion of mitigation measures, which reduces potential adverse impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, the County of Riverside has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration with mitigation measures in accordance with the provisions of CEQA.
Mitigation Measures:	Refer to the Appendix A, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan Checklist, of this Initial Study.

A copy of the Initial Study can be found at https://rcprojects.org/thousand-palms.

Please forward all comments by Monday, June 21, 2021, to:

Mr. Mohamed Eissa, Associate Transportation Planner
Riverside County Transportation Department
3525 14th Street
Riverside, California 92501
Office: (951) 955-1506
MEissa@rivco.org

Signature: Mary Zambon Date: 5.10.2021

Mary Zambon
Environmental Project Manager, Environmental Compliance
Riverside County Transportation Department

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APPENDIX

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Assembly Bill
AQ	Air Quality
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ARB	(California) Air Resources Board
ASR	Antenna Structure Registration
Basin	Salton Sea Air Basin
BMP	Best Management Practice
BSA	Biological Study Area
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CalARP Program	California Accidental Release Prevention Program
CalEMA	California Emergency Management Agency
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CBC	California Building Code
CBSC	California Building Standards Commission
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH_4	Methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide

CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
County	County of Riverside
CRA	Cultural Resources Assessment
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CRMP	Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan
CVCC	Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
CVFTL	Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard
CVMSHCP	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
CVMV	Coachella Valley milkvetch
CWA	(Federal) Clean Water Act
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DOC	(California) Department of Conservation
DPR	Department of Parks and Recreation
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances and Control
EIC	Eastern Information Center
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCAA	Federal Clean Air Act
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
FRA	Federal Responsibility Area
GCC	global climate change
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
IS	Initial Study
L_{max}	maximum instantaneous noise level
LOS	Level of Service

LRA	Local Responsibility Area
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
MT	metric ton(s)
ND	Negative Declaration
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOx	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O_3	Ozone
OPR	(California) Office of Planning and Research
PM_{10}	particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter
PMP	Paleontological Mitigation Plan
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
PRD	Permit Registration Document
Preserve	Coachella Valley Preserve
RCEM	Roadway Construction Emissions Model
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RCTD	Riverside County Transportation Department
RMP	Risk Management Plan
RoadMod	Roadway Construction Emissions Model

ROW	right-of-way
RPS	Renewables Portfolio Standard
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHMA	Seismic Hazards Mapping Act
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SLF	Sacred Land File
SMARA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act
SMARTS	Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System
SVP	Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
SWFL	Southwestern willow flycatcher
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TCR	Tribal Cultural Resource
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
XPI	Extended Phase I

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Initial Study (IS) has evaluated each of the issues contained in the checklist provided in Section 3.0 of this document. The objective of this environmental document is to inform the Riverside County (County) decision-makers, representatives of other affected/responsible agencies, and other interested parties of the potential environmental effects that may be associated with the Thousand Palms Canyon Road Project (project). This IS serves as the environmental review of the proposed project, as required pursuant to Section 15367 of the *State of California Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines),* the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); Public Resources Code (PRC) 21000, et seq.; and the State and local CEQA guidelines. The County of Riverside is the Lead Agency under CEQA. This IS was prepared to identify whether the proposed project will result in significant environmental effects.

The Initial Study is organized as follows:

Section 1.0 *Introduction and Purpose* provides a discussion of the IS's purpose, focus, and legal requirements.

Section 2.0 *Project Description* provides a detailed description of the proposed project.

Section 3.0 *Environmental Checklist* includes a checklist and accompanying analyses of the project's effect on the environment. For each environmental issue, the analysis identifies the level of project's environmental impact.

Section 4.0 *References* details the references cited throughout the document.

Appendix A *Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan Checklist* for those measures applied to this project to mitigate or avoid adverse effects on the environment.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE INITIAL STUDY

If an IS prepared for a proposed project determines that it may produce significant effects on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) shall be prepared. This further environmental review is required to address the significant environmental effects of the project and provide mitigation where feasible.

Pursuant to the provisions of CEQA and the State and local CEQA guidelines, the County is the Lead Agency and is charged with the responsibility of deciding whether or not to approve the proposed project. CEQA requires that the proposed project be reviewed to determine the environmental effects that would result if the project is approved and implemented. The County of Riverside (Lead Agency) has the responsibility for preparing the associated environmental document prior to consideration of the approval of the proposed project. The County has the authority to make decisions regarding discretionary actions relating to implementation of the proposed project.

This IS has been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.); the *CEQA Guidelines,*[1] and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementing CEQA. The objective of the Initial Study is to inform County decision-makers, representatives of other affected/responsible agencies, the public, and interested parties of the potential environmental consequences of the project. Upon completion of the IS, it was determined that mitigation would reduce project environmental impacts to levels below significance thresholds; therefore, an Environmental Impact Report would not be required and a Mitigated Negative Declaration would be the appropriate level of CEQA document.

As established in *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15063(c), the purposes of an IS are to:

- Provide the Lead Agency (County) with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Negative Declaration (ND), or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND);
- Enable an applicant or Lead Agency to modify a project, mitigating adverse impacts before an EIR is prepared, thereby enabling the project to qualify for an ND or MND;
- Assist in the preparation of an EIR, if one is required;
- Facilitate environmental assessment early in the design of a project;
- Provide a factual basis for finding in an ND or MND that a project will not have a significant effect on the environment;
- Eliminate unnecessary EIRs; and
- Determine whether a previously prepared EIR could be used with the project.

1.3 DETERMINATION

This Initial Study is based on an Environmental Checklist Form (Form), as suggested in Section 15063 (d) (3) of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The Form is found in Section 3.1 of this IS. It contains a series of questions about the proposed project for each of the listed topic areas. The Form is used to evaluate whether or not there are any significant environmental effects associated with implementation of the proposed project.

Appendix A provides an explanation for each check mark on the Form. The Form and the accompanying evaluation of the responses provide the information and analysis upon which the County may make its determination as to whether or not an EIR may be required for the project.

An Initial Study has been prepared for this project; pending public review, the County expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project would have no impact on Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing, and Recreation.

[1] California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000 through 15387.

2. In addition, the proposed project would have less than significant impact on Air Quality, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Public Services, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire.
3. The proposed project would have less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated on Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, and Mandatory Findings of Significance. Mitigation measures for impacts on these resource areas are as follows:

Biological Resources

BIO-1: Pre-construction Le Conte's Thrasher Survey. In order to avoid impacts to the Le Conte's thrasher, per the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) during the nesting season (January 15 through August 31), prior to the start of construction activities, surveys shall be conducted by an acceptable biologist on the construction site and within 500 feet of the construction site, or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet. If nesting Le Conte's thrashers are found, a 500-foot Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet, shall be established around the nest site. The ESA shall be staked and flagged. No construction shall be permitted within the ESA during the breeding season of January 15 through August 31 or until the young have fledged.

BIO-2: Pre-construction Burrowing Owl Survey. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey would be conducted in all areas of suitable habitat within project limit using an accepted protocol. Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall survey the construction area including a 500-foot buffer, or to the edge of the property if less than 500 feet, for burrows that could be used by burrowing owl. If a burrow is located, the biologist shall determine whether an owl is present in the burrow. If the burrow is determined to be occupied, the burrow shall be flagged and a 160-foot buffer during the non-breeding season or a 250-foot buffer during the breeding season or a buffer to the edge of the property boundary if less than 500 feet shall be established around the burrow. The buffer area shall be staked and flagged. No development activities shall be permitted within the buffer until the young are no longer dependent on the burrow.

BIO-3: Prior to commencement of construction activities for permanent impacts in jurisdictional features, the project shall obtain authorizations from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) pursuant to *Procedures for Discharge for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* or *State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ* and from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code have been obtained.

The type, amount, and location of any required mitigation (including payment of fees or purchase of credits) shall be established by each regulatory agency during the review of any required authorization. As determined appropriate by each agency, the following shall be incorporated into required permit(s):

1. Off-site replacement and/or restoration of RWQCB jurisdictional "waters of the State" within the Colorado River Watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 or within an adjacent watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts, and for any

temporary impacts to restore the impact area to pre-project conditions (i.e., pre-project contours and revegetate where applicable). Off-site mitigation may occur on land acquired for the purpose of in-perpetuity preservation, or through the purchase of mitigation credits at an agency-approved off-site mitigation bank.

2. Off-site replacement and/or restoration of CDFW jurisdictional streambed and associated riparian habitat within the Colorado River Watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 or within an adjacent watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts, and for any temporary impacts to restore the impact area to pre-project conditions (i.e., pre-project contours and revegetate where applicable). Off-site mitigation may occur on land acquired for the purpose of in-perpetuity preservation, or through the purchase of mitigation credits at an agency-approved off-site mitigation bank.

BIO-4: **Worker Environmental Awareness Program**. A Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) shall be implemented for work crews by a qualified biologist(s) prior to the commencement of construction activities and prior to site access by workers. Training materials and briefings shall include but not be limited to, discussion of the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts, the CVMSHCP, the consequences of noncompliance with project permitting requirements, identification and values of special-status plant and wildlife species and sensitive natural plant community habitats, fire protection measures, and hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures.

Cultural Resources

CUL-1: **Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan.** The Project Archaeologist, in consultation with the Monitoring Tribe(s), and the County shall develop a Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan (CRMP) to address the details, timing, and responsibility of all archaeological and cultural activities that will occur on the project site. Details in the CRMP shall include:

- Project grading and development scheduling.
- The coordination of a monitoring schedule as agreed upon by the Monitoring Tribe(s), the Project Archaeologist, and the County.
- The protocols and stipulations that the County, Monitoring Tribe(s), and Project Archaeologist shall follow in the event of inadvertent cultural resources discoveries, including any newly discovered cultural resources. They have the authority to stop all work within 60 feet of the find.

CUL-2: **Train Construction Personnel.** Prior to any grading, excavation, and/or other ground-disturbing activities on the project site, the Project Archaeologist and the Monitoring Tribe(s) shall conduct cultural resources sensitivity training for all construction personnel. Construction personnel shall be informed of the types of archaeological resources that may be encountered and of the proper procedures to be enacted in the event of an inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources or human remains. The County's construction manager shall ensure that construction personnel are made

available for and attend the training, and shall retain documentation demonstrating attendance.

CUL-3: **Monitoring.** All artifacts/cultural material discovered at the project site shall be inventoried and analyzed by the Project Archaeologist and Native American tribal monitor(s). If any cultural materials of Native American origin are discovered, all activities in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot radius) shall stop. The Project Archaeologist and Native American tribal monitor(s) shall analyze the Native American cultural materials for identification as everyday life and/or religious or sacred items, cultural affiliation, temporal placement, and function, as deemed possible. The significance of Native American resources shall be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and shall consider the religious beliefs, customs, and practices of the tribe(s). All items found in association with Native American human remains shall be considered grave goods or sacred in origin and subject to special handling.

CUL-4: **Inadvertent Discoveries.** In the event that Native American cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during the course of grading for this project, the following procedures shall be carried out for the treatment and disposition of the discoveries:

- Curation: The County shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources. Native American cultural materials that cannot be avoided or relocated at the project site shall be prepared for curation. The Project Archaeologist, following consultation with the Monitoring Tribe(s), shall deliver the materials to a qualified repository in Riverside County that meets or exceeds federal standards per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 36, Part 79, and that shall be made available to all qualified researchers and tribal representatives.
- Temporary On-Site Curation and Storage: During the course of construction, all discovered resources shall be secured on site in the mobile office. The removal of any cultural materials from the project site will need to be thoroughly inventoried, with Native American Tribal Monitor oversight of the process.
- Treatment and Final Disposition: The County shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources, including sacred items, burial goods, and all cultural materials and nonhuman remains, as part of the required mitigation for impacts to cultural resources within the County right-of-way. The County shall relinquish the cultural materials through the following methods and provide the cultural materials to the Consulting Tribe(s):
    - For on-site reburial of the discovered items, this shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from any future impacts. Reburial shall not occur until all cataloguing and basic recordation have been completed.

CUL-5: **Reporting.** The Project Archaeologist shall prepare a final archaeological report within 60 days of project completion. The report shall follow CRMP Guidelines and County requirements and shall include at a minimum: a discussion of monitoring methods and techniques used; the results of the monitoring program, including any cultural materials recovered; an inventory of any resources recovered; updated State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms, if any, and any other site(s) identified; final disposition of

the resources; and any additional recommendations. A final copy shall be submitted to the County, the Eastern Information Center, and the Monitoring Tribe(s).

CUL-6: Discovery of Human Remains. In the event human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur and halt all work within 60 feet until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The archaeologist who discovered the remains will contact the County so that they may work with the MLD to inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD will have the opportunity to offer recommendations for the disposition of the remains.

Tribal Cultural Resources

TCR-1: Tribal Monitoring. At least 30 days prior to the commencement of ground-disturbing activity, a Riverside County consultant shall provide a Native American Monitoring Agreement with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians to the County for review and approval.

TCR-2: Treatment and Final Disposition of Cultural Resources. Any archaeological resource unearthed during construction activities shall be evaluated by the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American Monitor(s). If the resource is determined to be Native American in origin, any such resource (including sacred items, burial goods, and all archaeological artifacts and non-human remains) shall be addressed through one or more of the following methods:

- Preservation in place by accommodating on-site reburial of the discovered items with the consulting Native American tribe(s). This shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from any future impacts. Reburial shall not occur until all cataloging and recordation efforts have been completed.
- A curation agreement with an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR Part 79. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility within Riverside County, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation.
- If more than one Native American Tribe or band is involved with the project, consensus needs to be reached amongst all Tribes involved regarding the repository. If consensus cannot be reached, the County of Riverside will select an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR 79.

TCR-3: Discovery of Human Remains. In the event that human remains (or remains that may be human) are discovered within the construction areas, all activity within 60 feet of the find shall be immediately halted. Any discovery of human remains shall be immediately

reported by the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American monitor(s) to the County Coroner. If the human remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), who shall appoint a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) in accordance with California Public Resources Code 5097.98.

The discovery of any Native American human remains and/or funerary objects shall be kept confidential and secure to prevent any further disturbance. In the case where discovered human remains cannot be fully documented and recovered on the same day, the remains and associated funerary objects, sacred objects and/or objects of cultural patrimony shall be covered with an opaque material or placed in opaque cloth bags. A physical barrier (e.g., metal plate, concrete slab that can be moved by heavy equipment) shall be placed over the excavation opening to protect the remains until examination by the MLD can occur. If this type of protective barrier is not available, a 24-hour guard shall be posted outside of working hours.

The MLD shall complete his or her inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD shall identify and direct the most appropriate means of treating the human remains and any associated funerary object(s). As determined through consultation with the County, the MLD shall make recommendations that allow the burial to remain in situ and protected.

Once complete, a final report of all activities associated with or resulting from the discovery of human remains shall be submitted to the NAHC.

1.4 PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE INITIAL STUDY

The Lead Agency for the IS for the proposed project is the County. Any questions about the preparation of this IS, its assumptions, or its conclusions should be referred to the following:

Mr. Mohamed Eissa, Associate Transportation Planner
Riverside County Transportation Department
3525 14th Street
Riverside, California 92501
Office: (951) 955-1506
MEissa@rivco.org

A 30-day public circulation period will begin Tuesday, May 18, 2021, and ends Monday, June 21, 2021. A virtual public meeting for this project will be held on Thursday, June 10, 2021, from 5:00 p.m. until 7 p.m. Written comments relating to this IS should be addressed to Mr. Mohamed Eissa at the email address shown above.

An electronic copy of the Initial Study and its appendix may also be viewed online at the following site: https://rcprojects.org/thousand-palms.

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2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Riverside County Transportation Department (RCTD) proposes to widen and resurface Thousand Palms Canyon Road from Ramon Road/Washington Street to Dillon Road, totaling approximately 4.71 miles. This project is just to the east of the unincorporated community of Thousand Palms in Riverside County, California.

Located 10 miles east of Palm Springs and north of Interstate 10, the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve (Preserve) encompasses approximately 20,000 acres. It contains the last undisturbed watershed in the Coachella Valley and the sources of water-carried and windborne sand. The Coachella Valley Nature Preserve (Figure 1) is adjacent to the project and the project is within the Thousand Palms and Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation area. The Preserve is a model of cooperation among federal, State, and private conservation efforts for managing sensitive natural areas. It consists of three separate preserves set aside for conservation in a landmark Habitat Conservation Plan signed in 1986. These are the Whitewater Floodplain Preserve, the Edom Hill/Willow Hole Preserve, and the Thousand Palms Preserve.

The project lies south of Dillon Road and north of Ramon Road as shown on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Myoma and East Deception Canyon, California* and *Whitewater, California* 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles in Sections 25 and 36 of Township 3 South, Range 6 East, and Sections 1, 12, 13, and 14 of Township 4 South, Range 6 East (Figure 2).

For thousands of years, particles of sand from the San Bernardino Mountains and Indio Hills washed into the Coachella Valley, forming a system of dunes. Today, these dunes are part of the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve (Preserve) and contain several palm oases, formed because San Andreas Fault lines allow water flowing underground to rise to the surface. The spectacular Thousand Palms Oasis includes a mile-long trail that winds past pools and native vegetation includes creosote bush, burrobush, smoke tree, and desert lavender, part of this area's unique habitat for wildlife.

The Preserve straddles the Indio Hills and the San Andreas Fault. The floor of the Preserve is composed of alluvial fans and isolated terraces of desert pavement dissected by wash areas in the north, along with extensive sand fields and dunes. The persistent northwesterly winds in the Coachella Valley move the finer particles and sands from the alluvial fans south of the Indio Hills into the ever-changing sand dunes.

2.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Thousand Palms Canyon Road is located just to the east of Thousand Palms and runs between Ramon Road/Washington Street on the south and Dillon Road to the north. There are no homes or businesses located on or near the road. This road is convenient and popular for those living in the Desert Hot Springs general area and traveling to and from the Palm Desert and the Thousand Palms area of Coachella Valley. Also, it is the only road with access to the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve.

This new RCTD project entails pavement widening and resurfacing of the entire existing road.

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LSA

LEGEND

- Biological Study Area
- Coachella Valley Preserve

0 750 1500
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); California Protected Areas Database (2020)

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FIGURE 1

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Coachella Valley Preserve

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LEGEND

Project Location

FIGURE 2

0 1000 2000

FEET

SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quad - *East Deception Canyon* (1988) and *Myoma* (1978), CA

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Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Regional and Project Location

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2.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The RCTD proposes to widen and resurface Thousand Palms Canyon Road, between Ramon Road/ Washington Street and Dillon Road, in the Thousand Palms area of Riverside County. Thousand Palms Canyon Road is a 2-lane north-south collector and is approximately 4.71 miles long.

Existing pavement width of the roadway is approximately 22 feet wide with 11-foot through lanes and a 1-foot paved shoulder. There is graded dirt shoulder of varying width along both sides of the road bounded by dirt berms. There is a half-mile segment of Thousand Palms Canyon Road adjacent to the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve that is 32 feet wide, with 12-foot through lanes and 4-foot paved shoulders, with graded shoulders bounded by dirt berms. The area in the immediate vicinity of the roadway is undeveloped.

The project scope includes pavement widening and resurfacing, constructing turn pockets, constructing Safety Edge pavement end condition, installing rumble strips, widening paved shoulders, grading dirt shoulders, grading dirt berms, installing and removing signs, applying traffic striping and thermoplastic pavement markings, and adding a Class II bike lane.[2]

Most portions of Thousand Palms Canyon Road will be resurfaced by grinding existing pavement to a depth of 0.6 foot, mixing and compacting grindings with native soil, and overlaying the new base with 0.4 foot of new asphalt concrete. The new pavement width will be 34 feet wide, with two 12-foot through lanes and 5-foot paved shoulders. The half-mile segment of Thousand Palms Canyon Road adjacent to the Preserve will be widened by saw-cutting and removing existing pavement to a depth of 0.4 foot and sliver-paving a new 0.4-foot deep section of asphalt by 2 feet on each side. A new right-turn pocket will be constructed at the Preserve entrance. A new left-turn pocket and driveway for McCallum Grove will be constructed approximately one half-mile north of the Preserve. Pavement width in the left-turn area will be 40 feet with two 10-foot through lanes, a 10-foot left-turn lane, and 5-foot paved shoulders. Maximum depth of disturbance for road construction activities is 0.6 foot. For sign removal and installation, depth of disturbance will be 2.5 feet. For potholing of utilities, maximum depth of disturbance will be 3 feet.

2.4 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Permits, approvals or agreements from the agencies and organizations listed in Table A would be required prior to the commencement of project activities:

Table A: Required Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Action
Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board	Enrollment in State Board General Order 2004-0004-DWQ to regulate the discharge of fill to waters of the State under Porter-Cologne
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement
State Water Resources Control Board	Notice of Intent to Comply with General Construction Activity National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit

[2] A Class II Bike Lane is defined as a portion of the roadway or highway that has been designated by striping, signage, and pavement markings for the preference or exclusive use of bicyclists.

2.5 DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Various technical reports have been prepared to assess specific issues that may result from the construction and operation of the proposed project. As relevant, information from these technical reports has been incorporated into the IS. The following technical reports were used in preparing this IS:

- *Biological Resources Assessment and Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis, Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project, Riverside, California* (April 2020).
- *Jurisdictional Delineation Report, Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project, Riverside County, California* (February 2020).

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

Project Title:	Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project
Lead Agency: **Name and Address:**	County of Riverside 3525 14th Street Riverside, California 92501
Contact Person: **Phone Number:** **Email Address:**	Mohamed Eissa (951) 955-1506 MEissa@rivco.org
Project Location:	Riverside County, just to the east of Thousand Palms, California
Project Sponsor's Name: **Address:**	County of Riverside 3525 14th Street Riverside, California 92501

General Plan Designation: Surrounding land use consists of mostly of vacant, open space. The General Plan land use is (OD-CH) Open Space-Conservation Habitat (i.e., the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve). The northern portion of the project, adjacent to Dillion Road is (OS-RUR) Open Space-Rural.

Zoning: Most of the surrounding area is under Conservation Habitat or (N-A) Natural Assets. The remaining area is Zoned (R-A-1 ¼) Single Family Dwellings.

Description of Project: The Riverside County Transportation Department proposes to widen and resurface Thousand Palms Canyon Road (approximately 4.71 miles) between Ramon Road/Washington Street and Dillon Road near the community of Thousand Palms, California. In addition, bike lanes will be added to the road during the reconstruction effort.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: The proposed project is located in an area clear of any existing residential, commercial, or agricultural land uses. It is surrounded by vacant land. The roadway traverses the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve located approximately in the middle of the project.

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval Is Required: Refer to Table A in Section 2.5

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1? If so, has consultation begun?

Yes. Refer to Checklist Section 3.1.7.

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (Refer to Public Resources Code Section 21083.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code Section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code Section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, with Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated, as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Energy
☐ Geology/Soils	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology/Water Quality	☐ Land Use/Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☐ Noise	☐ Population/Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☐ Transportation	☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities/Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

3.3 DETERMINATION (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LEAD AGENCY)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature _____ Date _____

Mary Zambon
Environmental Project Manager, Environmental Compliance
Riverside County Transportation Department

3.4 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a Lead Agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off site as well as on site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect and direct, and construction and operational impacts.
3. Once the Lead Agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Significant Impact." The Lead Agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analysis may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063 (c) (3) (d). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
   (a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
   (b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
   (c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures that were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead Agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans and zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. The analysis of each issue should identify:
   (a) The significance criteria or threshold used to evaluate each question; and
   (b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section is intended to provide evidence to substantiate the conclusions set forth in the Environmental Checklist. The section will discuss whether or not the proposed project would result in significant environmental impacts.

I. Aesthetics

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visits; County of Riverside General Plan; County of Riverside, Transportation Department, Thousand Palms Canyon Road, Widening and Resurfacing Plans; Cultural Resource Assessment for the Riverside County Transportation Department's Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening and Resurfacing Project, Riverside County, California (March 2020); and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Officially Designated State Scenic Highways and Historic Parkways.

Regulatory Setting

State Scenic Highways Program

The Caltrans Landscape Architecture Program administers the Scenic Highway Program contained in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260–263. The purpose of the program is to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special classifications. State Highways are classified as either Officially Listed or Eligible. A highway may be designated scenic based on the visibility of the natural landscape to travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

According to Caltrans' California Scenic Highway Mapping System, there are no Officially Listed scenic highways in or around this location (https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways).

Riverside County Scenic Corridors

The Riverside County General Plan addresses scenic corridors and highways. Riverside County contains abundant natural visual resources, including low-lying valleys, mountain ranges, rock formations, rivers, and lakes. These features are often enjoyed via Riverside County's many roadways. Due to the visual significance of many of these areas, several roadways have been officially recognized as either Eligible or Designated State or County Scenic Highways. These roadways are depicted in the Circulation Element as well as within each of the 19 area plans, where applicable. In this case, the County Eligible Scenic Corridors are shown in the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan.

Relevant Riverside County Policies

- LU 14.1 Preserve and protect outstanding scenic vistas and visual features for the enjoyment of the traveling public. (AI 32, 79)
- LU 14.2 Incorporate riding, hiking, and bicycle trails and other compatible public recreational facilities within scenic corridors. (AI 33, 41)

According to the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan, although Dillon Road at the northern terminus of the project is a County Eligible scenic corridor, Thousand Palms Canyon Road is not listed as such (https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/ap/WCVAP_121019.pdf).

Findings of Fact

For Questions a, b, c, and d: **No Impact.**

A scenic vista can be categorized as either containing a panoramic view or a focal view. Panoramic views are typically associated with publicly-accessible vantage points that provide a sweeping geographic orientation not commonly available (for example, skylines, valleys, mountain ranges, or large bodies of water). Focal views are typically associated with views of natural landforms, public art/signs, and visually important structures, such as historic buildings.

The project improvements will be constructed within the existing roadway right-of-way and on the same alignment as the existing roadway. The widening of the roadway would not result in additional lanes being added to the roadway. The roadway will remain two lanes. The project would result in a two-lane road (one lane in each direction with one left-turn pocket) with medians, a paved shoulder, and the addition of a Class II bike lane in each direction. The areas immediately surrounding the project site include vacant land with no private structures within approximately a mile in either direction. The Coachella Valley Nature Preserve located half way between Dillon Road and Ramon Road contains a parking area and hiking trails among the palms. In addition, just north of the Preserve Welcome Center are two buildings which are used as part of the Preserve.

The proposed project would include at-grade roadway improvements similar to existing conditions. Vertical elements such as utility poles and stop signs currently exist within the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not introduce new visual intrusions and does not contain elements that would result in obstruction of views to an extent that is any

greater in magnitude than the existing condition. The proposed project would not result in additional vertical visual elements that would affect views within the project area or a scenic vista. Therefore, no impact is related to this issue and no mitigation is proposed.

Per Caltrans,[3] the project is not located on or near a designated or eligible scenic highway. Per the Riverside County General Plan, Thousand Palms Canyon Road is not a County Eligible Scenic Corridor.[4]

The Cultural Resources Assessment (CRA) identified five properties within the project area as being historic-period properties. However, these properties were determined to not be significant historic resources due to a variety of factors, including structural changes to historic-period properties, a lack of association with historical figures or events, or commonality of the architectural or artistic attributes associated with the properties. Regardless, there is no impact because there are no State scenic highways.

The project area is located in an area with views of the Little San Bernardino Mountains, Indio Hills and the Coachella Valley Preserve. The project improvements will take place entirely within the existing roadway right-of-way and on the same alignment as the existing roadway. The proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site as the project consists only of improvements and a slight widening of the pavement of an existing roadway.

Short-term, temporary visual impacts may occur during the construction phase of the project. Temporary construction impacts would include the presence of construction equipment and materials, temporary structures, contractor staging areas, dust, potential night lighting, hauling of materials, and detour signs. Construction impacts would cease following completion of the project and disturbed areas would be restored to their pre-disturbance condition; therefore, implementation of the project would not result in a permanent, long-term impact on the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. Visual mitigation for the construction period would not be considered necessary due to the temporary nature of these impacts and limit in scale of the temporary impacts.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the improvement and widening of an existing roadway. Traffic signs and light and glare from vehicles already exist within the project site. Signs used during the construction period would only be temporary. The project does not add any permanent lighting to the project area although some temporary lighting may be utilized during construction. The proposed project would not introduce a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Therefore, no impact is related to this issue and no mitigation is proposed.

[3] http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm, site accessed August 31, 2020.
[4] https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/ap/WCVAP_121019.pdf, site accessed March 29, 2021.

II. Agricultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Sources: Field visits, California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) of Section 65570 of the California Government Code; the 2016 Riverside County Important Farmland Map (California Department of Conservation 2016a); Williamson Act records search.

Regulatory Setting

California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) manages the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) to assess the location, quality, and quantity of agricultural lands and conversion of these lands over time. In each county, the land is analyzed for soil and irrigation quality, and the highest quality land is designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Based on the results of these analyses, the DOC issues maps every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance.

Williamson Act

The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, enables local governments and private landowners to enter into contracts that restrict specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. As a result, landowners receive reduced property tax assessments because they are based upon farming and open space uses rather than market value.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a, b, c, d, and e: **No Impact**

Based on the 2016 Riverside County Important Farmland Map (California Department of Conservation 2016a), the area where this project is located is "Other Land." This is "Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments, brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing, confined livestock, poultry, or aquaculture facilities, strip mines, borrow pits, and water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as other land." Therefore, given that the project area lands do not fall into the listed categories per State and County records, there is no impact to Prime, Unique or Farmland of Statewide Importance and no mitigation is proposed.

The proposed road improvement project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses because no lands adjacent to the project are used for agricultural purposes. Williamson Act[5] contracts restrict development of contract lands. The contracts typically limit land use in contract lands to agriculture, recreation, and open space unless otherwise stated in the contract. The properties associated with the project site are not in the Williamson Act Conservation Contract database (California Department of Conservation 2016b).

The proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning of forest or timberland because no such lands are within the project area. The County does not identify any parcels within the project limits zoned for forest land or timberland. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or cause rezoning of forest land or timberland.

The Thousand Palms Canyon Road Project would not affect any existing agricultural operations or result in a conversion of land use within the project vicinity to or from agricultural use. Therefore, no impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

[5] The Williamson Act is a procedure authorized under State law to preserve agricultural lands as well as open space. Property owners entering into a Williamson Act contract receive a reduction in property taxes in return for agreeing to protect the land's open space or agricultural values.

III. Air Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS), Federal Clean Air Act, CEQA Air Quality Handbook, County of Riverside 2015 General Plan, Southern California Association of Government's 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), SCAQMD Rule 403, SCAQMD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook (1993), SCAQMD's Air Quality Significance Thresholds (March 2015), Roadway Construction Emissions Model (RoadMod), Version 9.0.0 (SMAQMD n.d.), SCAQMD's standard construction practices (Rules 402 and 403), California Vehicle Code Section 23114, Brief of Amicus Curiae by the SCAQMD (April 6, 2015), SCAQMD's 2012 Air Quality Management Plan, California Air Resources Board (1986), Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology, *A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos Report* (August 2000).

Enclosed in this section are Tables B and C with the typical SCAQMD Air Quality (AQ) Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Coachella Valley. There are no construction impacts for the proposed project; however, the attached control measures would be the standard air quality measures for controlling construction fugitive dust emissions.

Regulatory Setting

United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Clean Air Act

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) implements national air quality programs at the federal level. USEPA air quality mandates are drawn primarily from the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), which was enacted in 1963. The FCAA was amended in 1970, 1977, and 1990.

California Air Resources Board and the California Clean Air Act

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) is the agency responsible for the coordination and oversight of State and local air pollution control programs in California and for implementing the California Clean Air Act (CCAA), adopted in 1988. The CCAA requires that all air districts in the State achieve and maintain the CAAQS by the earliest practical date. The CCAA specifies that districts

should focus on reducing the emissions from transportation and air-wide emission sources, and provides districts with the authority to regulate indirect sources.

Other ARB duties include monitoring air quality, establishing CAAQS, determining and updating area designations and maps, and setting emissions standards for mobile sources, consumer products, small utility engines, and off-road vehicles. ARB's Diesel Risk Reduction Plan[6] is intended to reduce diesel particulate matter emissions and associated health risks substantially through introduction of ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel—a step already implemented—and cleaner-burning diesel engines.

Because of the robust evidence relating proximity to roadways and a range of non-cancer and cancer health effects, ARB also created guidance for avoiding air quality conflicts in land use planning in its *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective* (2005).[7] In its guidance, ARB advises that new sensitive uses (e.g., residences, schools, daycare centers, playgrounds, and hospitals) not be located within 500 feet of a freeway or urban roads carrying 100,000 vehicles per day, or within 1,000 feet of a distribution center (warehouse) that accommodates more than 100 trucks or more than 90 refrigerator trucks per day. The *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook* specifically states that these recommendations are advisory and acknowledges that land use agencies must balance other considerations, including housing and transportation needs, economic development priorities, and other quality of life issues.

South Coast Air Quality Management District

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) was created to ensure regional and local compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act and to implement the state air quality program. The proposed project is within the Salton Sea Air Basin (Basin), administered by the SCAQMD and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and falls under the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP).[8]

Riverside County General Plan

The Riverside County General Plan incorporates and complies with regulations from the SCAQMD and SCAG. The project area lies within the Salton Sea Air Basin, which is managed jointly by these agencies. The County's General Plan includes the following goals and policies related to air quality that are applicable to the proposed Project:

- AQ 1.4 Coordinate with the SCAQMD and MDAQMD to ensure that all elements of air quality plans regarding reduction of air pollutant emissions are being enforced. (AI 111)
- AQ 1.5 Establish and implement air quality, land use and circulation measures that improve not only the County's environment but the entire region. (AI 111)

6 California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2000. *Risk Reduction Plan to Reduce Particulate Matter Emissions from Diesel-Fueled Engines and Vehicles.* Prepared by the Stationary Source Division and Mobile Source Control Division. October. Website: www.arb.ca.gov/diesel/documents/rrpFinal.pdf (accessed January 2019).

7 California Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resources Board. 2005. *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. April. Website: www.arb.ca.gov/ch/handbook.pdf (accessed January 2019).

8 County of Riverside. 2015. Riverside County General Plan 2015. https://planning.rctlma.org/General-Plan-Zoning/General-Plan (accessed December 2020).

- AQ 9.1 Cooperate with local, regional, State and federal jurisdictions to reduce vehicle miles traveled and motor vehicle emissions through job creation. (AI 18)
- AQ 9.2 Attain performance goals and/or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reductions which are consistent with SCAG's Growth Management Plan. (AI 26)
- AQ 14.4 Preserve transportation corridors with high demand potential or regional significance for future expansion to meet project demand. (AI 53)

Findings of Fact

a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No Impact. The project site is located in the Thousand Palms area, which is within the Salton Sea Air Basin (Basin). The Basin includes the desert portions of Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. Air quality within the northern desert portion of the Basin is under the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). SCAQMD adopted the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) in March 2017 to manage air quality in the Basin.

The main purpose of an AQMP is to describe air pollution control strategies to be taken by a city, county, or region classified as a nonattainment area. A nonattainment area is considered to have worse air quality than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and/or the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS), as defined in the Federal Clean Air Act. The Basin is in nonattainment for the federal and State standards for ozone (O_3) and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$). In addition, the Basin is in nonattainment for the State particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}) standard and in attainment/maintenance for the federal PM_{10}, carbon monoxide (CO), and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) standards.

Consistency with the 2016 AQMP for the Basin would be achieved if a project is consistent with the goals, objectives, and assumptions in the respective plan to achieve the federal and State air quality standards. Per the SCAQMD *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* (April 1993), there are two main indicators of a project's consistency with the applicable AQMP: (1) whether the project would increase the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations, cause or contribute to new violations, or delay timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emission reductions specified in the 2016 AQMP; and (2) whether the project would exceed the 2016 AQMP's assumptions for 2040 or yearly increments based on the year of project buildout and construction phasing. For the proposed project to be consistent with the AQMP, its construction emissions should not exceed the SCAQMD daily threshold or cause a significant impact on air quality. Additionally, if feasible control measures are implemented and are shown to reduce the impact level to less than significant, a project may be deemed consistent with the AQMP.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the road conditions for current traffic and add bike lanes onto the improved roadway. The roadway is designated as a collector road in the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan under the County's General Plan Circulation Element.

In the case of the 2016 AQMP, three sources of data form the basis for the projections of air pollutant emissions: the County of Riverside 2015 General Plan population and employment

forecasts, Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG's) regional growth forecast, and SCAG's 2016–2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP/SCS also provides socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population growth. The proposed project would improve a segment of Thousand Palms Canyon Road to enhance the mobility and safety for drivers and bicyclists within the project area. As such, the project would not result in a change in land use for the existing project site. The proposed project would be consistent with the types, intensity, and patterns of land use envisioned for the site vicinity in the RTP/SCS.

The AQMP also contains air pollutant reduction strategies and demonstrates that the applicable ambient air quality standards can be achieved within the time frames required under federal law. Growth projections from local general plans adopted by cities in the SCAQMD are provided to SCAG, which develops regional growth forecasts that are used to develop future air quality forecasts for the AQMP. Development consistent with the growth projections in the General Plan is considered to be consistent with the AQMP. As discussed above, the proposed project would not alter the General Plan land use designation for the project site. Therefore, the proposed project meets this AQMP consistency criterion.

Tables B and C are two brief tables with the typical SCAQMD AQ BMP for the Coachella Valley. There are no construction impacts for the proposed project that require air quality-related mitigation; however, the attached control measures would be the standard air quality measures for controlling construction fugitive dust emissions. For any projects in Coachella Valley, SCAQMD Rule 403 requires that "**best available control measures**" be utilized whenever a dust-generating activity occurs in the Basin. These measures are listed in Table B and Table C of Rule 403 below. It is important to note that all applicable measures from Tables B and C should be implemented to achieve the required PM_{10} emissions reductions.

Table B: Required Best Available Control Measures (SCAQMD Rule 403)

Control Measure		Guidance
Backfilling		
01-1	Stabilize backfill material when not actively handling; and	• Mix backfill soil with water prior to moving • Dedicate water truck or high capacity hose to backfilling equipment • Empty loader bucket slowly so that no dust plumes are generated • Minimize drop height from loader bucket
01-2	Stabilize backfill material during handling; and	
01-3	Stabilize soil at completion of activity.	
Clearing and Grubbing		
02-1	Maintain stability of soil through pre-watering of site prior to clearing and grubbing; and	• Maintain live perennial vegetation where possible • Apply water in sufficient quantity to prevent generation of dust plumes
02-2	Stabilize soil during clearing and grubbing activities; and	
02-3	Stabilize soil immediately after clearing and grubbing activities.	

Table B: Required Best Available Control Measures (SCAQMD Rule 403)

Control Measure		Guidance
Clearing Forms		
03-1 03-2 03-3	Use water spray to clear forms; or Use sweeping and water spray to clear forms; or Use vacuum system to clear forms.	• Use of high pressure air to clear forms may cause exceedance of Rule requirements
Crushing		
04-1 04-2	Stabilize surface soils prior to operation of support equipment; and Stabilize material after crushing.	• Follow permit conditions for crushing equipment • Pre-water material prior to loading into crusher • Monitor crusher emissions opacity • Apply water to crushed material to prevent dust plumes
Cut and Fill		
05-1 05-2	Pre-water soils prior to cut and fill activities; and Stabilize soil during and after cut and fill activities.	• For large sites, pre-water with sprinklers or water trucks and allow time for penetration • Use water trucks/pulls to water soils to depth of cut prior to subsequent cuts
Demolition – Mechanical/Manual		
06-1 06-2 06-3 06-4	Stabilize wind erodible surfaces to reduce dust; and Stabilize surface soil where support equipment and vehicles will operate; and Stabilize loose soil and demolition debris; and Comply with AQMD Rule 1403.	• Apply water in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes
Disturbed Soil		
07-1 07-02	Stabilize disturbed soil throughout the construction site; and Stabilize disturbed soil between structures	• Limit vehicular traffic and disturbances on soils where possible • If interior block walls are planned, install as early as possible • Apply water or a stabilizing agent in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes
Earthmoving Activities		
08-1 08-2 08-3	Pre-apply water to depth of proposed cuts; and Re-apply water as necessary to maintain soils in a damp condition and to ensure that visible emissions do not exceed 100 feet in any direction; and Stabilize soils once earthmoving activities are complete.	• Grade each project phase separately, timed to coincide with construction phase • Upwind fencing can prevent material movement on site • Apply water or a stabilizing agent in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes

Table B: Required Best Available Control Measures (SCAQMD Rule 403)

Control Measure		Guidance
Importing/Exporting of Bulk Materials		
09-1	Stabilize material while loading to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and 09-2 Maintain at least six inches of freeboard on haul vehicles; and 09-3 Stabilize material while transporting to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and 09-4 Stabilize material while unloading to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and 09-5 Comply with Vehicle Code Section 23114.	• Use tarps or other suitable enclosures on haul trucks • Check belly-dump truck seals regularly and remove any trapped rocks to prevent spillage • Comply with track-out prevention/mitigation requirements • Provide water while loading and unloading to reduce visible dust plumes
Landscaping		
10-1	Stabilize soils, materials, slopes.	• Apply water to materials to stabilize materials in a crusted condition • Maintain effective cover over materials • Stabilize sloping surfaces using soil binders until vegetation or groundcover can effectively stabilize the slopes • Hydroseed prior to rain season
Road Shoulder Maintenance		
11-1	Apply water to unpaved shoulders prior to clearing; and 11-2 Apply chemical dust suppressants and/or washed gravel to maintain a stabilized surface after completing road shoulder maintenance.	• Installation of curbing and/or paving of road shoulders can reduce recurring maintenance costs • Use of chemical dust suppressants can inhibit vegetation growth and reduce future road shoulder maintenance costs
Screening		
12-1	Pre-water material prior to screening; and 12-2 Limit fugitive dust emissions to opacity and plume length standards; and 12-3 Stabilize material immediately after screening.	• Dedicate water truck or high capacity hose to screening operation • Drop material through the screen slowly and minimize drop height • Install wind barrier with a porosity of no more than 50% upwind of screen to the height of the drop point
Staging Areas		
13-1	Stabilize staging areas during use; and 13-2 Stabilize staging area soils at project completion.	• Limit size of staging area • Limit vehicle speeds to 15 miles per hour • Limit number and size of staging area entrances/exits
Stockpiles/Bulk Material Handling		
14-1	Stabilize stockpiled materials. 14-2 Stockpiles within 100 yards of off-site occupied buildings must not be greater than eight feet in height; or must have a road bladed to the top to allow water truck access or must have an operational water irrigation system that is capable of complete stockpile coverage.	• Add or remove material from the downwind portion of the storage pile • Maintain storage piles to avoid steep sides or faces

Table B: Required Best Available Control Measures (SCAQMD Rule 403)

Control Measure	Guidance
Traffic Areas for Construction Activities	
15-1 Stabilize all off-road traffic and parking areas; and 15-2 Stabilize all haul routes; and 15-3 Direct construction traffic over established haul routes.	• Apply gravel/paving to all haul routes as soon as possible to all future roadway areas • Barriers can be used to ensure vehicles are only used on established parking areas/haul routes
Trenching	
16-1 Stabilize surface soils where trencher or excavator and support equipment will operate; and 16.2 Stabilize soils at the completion of trenching activities.	• Pre-watering of soils prior to trenching is an effective preventive measure. • For deep trenching activities, pre-trench to 18 inches soak soils via the pre-trench and resuming trenching • Washing mud and soils from equipment at the conclusion of trenching activities can prevent crusting and drying of soil on equipment
Truck Loading	
17-1 Pre-water material prior to loading; and 17.2 Ensure that freeboard exceeds six inches (CVC 23114)	• Empty loader bucket such that no visible dust plumes are created • Ensure that the loader bucket is close to the truck to minimize drop height while loading
Turf Overseeding	
18-1 Apply sufficient water immediately prior to conducting turf vacuuming activities to meet opacity and plume length standards; and 18-2 Cover haul vehicles prior to exiting the site.	• Haul waste material immediately off site
Unpaved Roads/Parking Lots	
19-1 Stabilize soils to meet the applicable performance standards; and 19-2 Limit vehicular travel to established unpaved roads (haul routes) and unpaved parking lots.	• Restricting vehicular access to established unpaved travel paths and parking lots can reduce stabilization requirements
Vacant Land	
20-1 In instances where vacant lots are 0.10 acre or larger and have a cumulative area of 500 square feet or more that are driven over and/or used by motor vehicles and/or off-road vehicles, prevent motor vehicle and/or off-road vehicle trespassing, parking and/or access by installing barriers, curbs, fences, gates, posts, signs, shrubs, trees or other effective control measures.	• Identify a dust control supervisor that is employed by or contracted with the property owner or developer, is on the site or available on-site within 30 minutes during working hours, has the authority to expeditiously employ sufficient dust mitigation measures to ensure compliance with all Rule requirements, and has completed the AQMD Fugitive Dust Control Class and has been issued a valid Certificate of Completion for the class; and • Notify the SCAQMD Executive Officer in writing within 30 days after the site no longer qualifies as a large operation.

Table C: Fugitive Dust Control Actions (SCAQMD Rule 403)

Fugitive Dust Source Category Control Actions	
Earthmoving (except construction cutting and filling areas, and mining operations)	
(1a)	Maintain soil moisture content at a minimum of 12 percent, as determined by the ASTM [American Society for Testing and Materials] method D2216, or other equivalent method approved by the Executive Officer, the California Air Resources Board, and the U.S. EPA. Two soil moisture evaluations must be conducted during the first three hours of active operations during a calendar day, and two such evaluations each subsequent four-hour period of active operations; OR
(1a-1)	For any earthmoving which is more than 100 feet from all property lines, conduct watering as necessary to prevent visible dust emissions from exceeding 100 feet in length in any direction.
Earthmoving: Construction fill areas	
(1b)	Maintain soil moisture content at a minimum of 12 percent, as determined by ASTM method D2216, or other equivalent method approved by the Executive Officer, the California Air Resources Board, and the U.S. EPA. For areas which have an optimum moisture content for compaction of less than 12 percent, as determined by ASTM Method 1557 or other equivalent method approved by the Executive Officer and the California Air Resources Board and the U.S. EPA, complete the compaction process as expeditiously as possible after achieving at least 70 percent of the optimum soil moisture content. Two soil moisture evaluations must be conducted during the first three hours of active operations during a calendar day, and two such evaluations during each subsequent four-hour period of active operations.
Earthmoving: Construction cut areas and mining operations	
(1c)	Conduct watering as necessary to prevent visible emissions from extending more than 100 feet beyond the active cut or mining area unless the area is inaccessible to watering vehicles due to slope conditions or other safety factors.
Disturbed surface areas (except completed grading areas)	
(2a/b)	Apply dust suppression in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface. Any areas which cannot be stabilized, as evidenced by wind driven fugitive dust must have an application of water at least twice per day to at least 80 percent of the unstabilized area.
Disturbed Surface Areas: Completed Grading Areas	
(2c)	Apply chemical stabilizers within five working days of grading completion; OR
(2d)	Take actions (3a) or (3c) specified for inactive disturbed surface areas.
Inactive Disturbed Surface Areas	
(3a)	Apply water to at least 80 percent of all inactive disturbed surface areas on a daily basis when there is evidence of wind driven fugitive dust, excluding any areas which are inaccessible to watering vehicles due to excessive slope or other safety conditions; OR
(3b)	Apply dust suppressants in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface; OR
(3c)	Establish vegetative groundcover within 21 days after active operations have ceased. Groundcover must be of sufficient density to expose less than 30 percent of unstabilized ground within 90 days of planting, and at all times thereafter; OR
(3d)	Utilize any combination of control actions (3a), (3b), and (3c) such that, in total, these actions apply to all inactive disturbed surface areas.
Unpaved Roads	
(4a)	Water all roads used for any vehicular traffic at least once per every two hours of active operations [3 times per normal 8 hour work day]; OR
(4b)	Water all roads used for any vehicular traffic once daily and restrict vehicle speeds to 15 miles per hour; OR
(4c)	Apply a chemical stabilizer to all unpaved road surfaces in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface.
Open Storage Piles	
(5a)	Apply chemical stabilizers; OR
(5b)	Apply water to at least 80 percent of the surface area of all open storage piles on a daily basis when there is

Table C: Fugitive Dust Control Actions (SCAQMD Rule 403)

Fugitive Dust Source Category Control Actions	
	evidence of wind driven fugitive dust; OR
(5c)	Install temporary coverings; OR
(5d)	Install a three-sided enclosure with walls no more than 50 percent porosity which extend, at the minimum, to the top of the pile. This option may only be used at aggregate-related plants or at center manufacturing facilities.
All Categories	
(6a)	Any other control measures approved by the Executive Officer and the U.S. EPA as equivalent to the methods specified in Table 2 may be used.

In conclusion, the determination of 2016 AQMP consistency is primarily concerned with the long-term influence of a project on air quality in the Basin. The proposed project would not result in a long-term impact on the region's ability to meet State and federal air quality standards. Also, the proposed project would be consistent with the goals and policies of the 2016 AQMP for control of fugitive dust (e.g., SCAQMD Rule 403). Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the regional AQMP and no impact would occur. No mitigation is proposed.

b) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. The 2019 *State CEQA Guidelines* indicate that a significant impact would occur if the project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. Specific criteria for determining whether the potential air quality impacts of a project are significant are set forth in the SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* (1993). The criteria include emission thresholds, compliance with State and national air quality standards, and conformity with the existing State Implementation Plan (SIP) or consistency with the current AQMP. Table D presents a summary of the specific criteria contained in the SCAQMD's *Air Quality Significance Thresholds* (March 2015).

Table D: SCAQMD Significance Thresholds (lbs/day)

Air Pollutant	Construction Phase	Operational Phase
ROCs	75	55
CO	550	550
NOx	100	55
SOx	150	150
PM_{10}	150	150
$PM_{2.5}$	55	55

Source: SCAQMD. *Air Quality Significance Thresholds* (April 2019).

CO = carbon monoxide
lbs/day = pounds per day
NOx = nitrogen oxides
$PM_{2.5}$ = particular matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter
PM_{10} = particular matter less than 10 microns in diameter
ROCs = reactive organic compounds
SCAQMD = South Coast Air Quality Management District
SOx = sulfur oxides

Projects in the Basin with emissions that exceed any of the mass daily emission thresholds in Table D would be considered significant by the SCAQMD.

Construction Emissions. Air quality impacts would occur during demolition and construction of the proposed project due to soil disturbance and equipment exhaust. Major sources of emissions that would occur during grubbing/land clearing, grading/excavation drainage/utilities/ sub-grading, and paving/construction include (1) exhaust emissions from construction vehicles; (2) equipment and fugitive dust generated by vehicles and equipment traveling over exposed surfaces; and (3) disturbances from compacting and paving.

Peak daily and annual emissions were analyzed using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model (RoadMod), Version 9.0.0 (SMAQMD n.d.). See Table E. Project-specific information provided by the project engineer was used where available, including details and the construction schedule. The following major construction equipment is anticipated to be used:

- Pulverizing Operations: Pulverizing machine, skip loader, roller (wheel drum), grader, and water truck.
- Grinding Operations: Grinder, dump truck, street sweeper, and water truck.
- Paving Operations: Paver, Roller (Drum), Dump Truck, Skip Loader, and Water Truck
- Pavement Delineations: Truck (paint traffic stripe) and utility truck for thermoplastic pavement markings.

The size of the equipment is to be selected by the contractor.

Table E: Peak Daily Construction Emissions (lbs/day)

Peak Construction Emissions	ROG	NOx	CO	SO_2	PM_{10} (total)	$PM_{2.5}$ (total)
Grubbing/Land Clearing	1.71	13.90	12.38	0.03	20.42	4.51
Grading/Excavation	6.29	50.93	54.35	0.12	21.69	5.63
Drainage/Utilities/Sub-Grading	3.90	33.79	30.14	0.07	21.03	5.07
Paving/Construction	2.13	21.63	15.92	0.05	0.66	0.54
Highest Peak Daily Emissions	**6.29**	**50.93**	**54.35**	**0.12**	**21.69**	**5.63**
SCAQMD Construction Emissions Threshold	**75.0**	**100.0**	**550.0**	**150.0**	**150.0**	**55.0**
Exceed Significance?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: Compiled by LSA (March 2020).

CO = carbon monoxide
lbs/day = pounds per day
NOx = nitrogen oxide
$PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter
PM_{10} = particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter
ROG = reactive organic gases
SCAQMD = South Coast Air Quality Management District
SO_2 = sulfur dioxide

For the purpose of the air quality analysis, these equipment types were analyzed as a worst-case scenario. Also, the construction is anticipated to start in 2021 and the estimated duration is 40 working days (approximately 2 months).

As Table E shows, construction equipment/vehicle emissions during construction would not exceed any of the SCAQMD daily emissions thresholds. Therefore, the project's short-term emissions impact would be less than significant. No mitigation is proposed.

The project is required to comply with other regional rules that assist in reducing short-term air pollutant emissions. Adherence to the standard control measures is required for all development activity within the Basin. These compliance measures include, but are not limited to the following:

- **SCAQMD Rule 403:** Rule 403 requires that fugitive dust be controlled with best-available control measures so that the presence of such dust does not remain visible in the atmosphere beyond the property line of the emission source. In addition, SCAQMD Rule 403 requires implementation of dust suppression techniques to prevent fugitive dust from creating a nuisance off site. Applicable dust suppression techniques from Rule 403 are summarized below. Implementation of these dust suppression techniques can reduce the fugitive dust generation (and thus, the PM_{10} component). Compliance with these rules would reduce impacts on nearby sensitive receptors (SCAQMD Rule 403). The applicable Rule 403 measures include:
    - Apply nontoxic chemical soil stabilizers according to manufacturers' specifications to all inactive construction areas (previously graded areas inactive for 10 days or more).
    - Water active sites at least twice daily (locations where grading is to occur will be thoroughly watered prior to earthmoving).
    - Cover all trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials, or maintain at least 0.6 meter (2 feet) of freeboard (vertical space between the top of the load and top of the trailer) in accordance with the requirements of California Vehicle Code Section 23114.
    - Pave construction access roads at least 30 meters (100 feet) onto the site from the main road.
    - Reduce traffic speeds on all unpaved roads to 15 mph or less.
- **SCAQMD Rule 403.1:** Supplemental Fugitive Dust Control Requirements for Coachella Valley Sources: is a supplemental rule to Rule 403 and is applicable to man-made sources of fugitive dust in Coachella Valley. The purpose of this rule is to reduce fugitive dust and resulting PM_{10} emissions from man-made sources in the Coachella Valley. Rule 403.1 requires a Fugitive Dust Control Plan approved by SCAQMD or an authorized local government agency prior to initiating any construction/ earth-moving activity. These requirements are only applicable to construction projects with 5,000 or more square feet of surface area disturbance.
- **SCAQMD Rule 431.2:** Rule 431.2 limits the release of SO_2 into the atmosphere from the burning of fuel.
- **SCAQMD Rules 1186 and 1186.1:** Rules 1186 and 1186.1 relate to PM_{10} emissions reductions from paved/unpaved roads and use of lower polluting street sweepers, respectively, to reduce the release of criteria pollutant emissions into the atmosphere during construction.

- **ARB In-Use Off-Road Diesel Vehicle Regulation:** The California Air Resources Board (ARB) has adopted a regulation to reduce diesel particulate matter (DPM) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from in-use (existing) off-road heavy-duty diesel vehicles in California. Such vehicles are used in construction, mining, and industrial operations. The appropriate standard measures are as follows:
    - The project applicants are required to implement, by contract specifications, that all heavy-duty, diesel-powered construction equipment used at the project site during the following phases be powered by ARB-certified Tier 3 engines or higher and install a minimum of Level 1 diesel particulate filter on all equipment exhaust system. Contract specifications shall be included in project construction documents, which shall be reviewed by the County prior to issuance of a grading permit. This measure applies to all construction phases.
    - The project applicants are required to implement, by contract specifications, that construction equipment engines be maintained in good condition and in proper tune per the manufacturer's specification for the duration of construction. Contract specifications shall be included in project construction documents, which shall be reviewed by the County to issuance of a grading permit.
- **California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Division 3, Chapter 1, Article 4.5, Section 2025:** The purpose of this regulation is to reduce emissions of DPM, NOx, and other criteria pollutants from in-use diesel-fueled vehicles. It applies to any person, business, federal government agency, school district, or school transportation provider that owns or operates, leases, or rents affected vehicles that operate in California.

The best available control measures, as specified in SCAQMD Rule 403, are required for any project in the Basin. As detailed in Table E, project-related construction emissions would not exceed SCAQMD's significance thresholds for construction activities. As such, no significant air quality impacts would occur from the construction phase of the proposed project.

Long-Term Regional Vehicle Emission Impact. The proposed project involves improvements to the Thousand Palms Canyon Road and includes adding bike lanes on both sides of the road within the project area. The proposed project would not construct or permit the construction of any trip-generating land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). In addition, the roadway would remain a two lane roadway which would not facilitate additional traffic. Therefore, the project would cause no long-term change in regional vehicle air emission than would occur with the existing roadway. As no changes in emissions for the operations phase of the project would occur, no significant air quality impacts would occur. No mitigation is proposed.

c) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact. Sensitive receptors include residences, schools, hospitals, and similar uses that are sensitive to adverse air quality. None of these sensitive receptors are within proximity of ¼ mile (or 1,350 feet) to the road construction area.

Project implementation may expose surrounding sensitive receptors to airborne particulates, as well as a small quantity of construction equipment pollutants (i.e., diesel-fueled vehicles and

equipment). However, the construction contractors would be required to comply with the SCAQMD's standard construction practices (Rules 402 and 403) by implementing measures to reduce or eliminate emissions. Rule 402 requires implementation of dust suppression techniques to prevent fugitive dust from creating a nuisance off site. Rule 403 requires that fugitive dust be controlled with best available control measures so that the presence of such dust does not remain visible in the atmosphere beyond the property line of the emission source. Some of the applicable dust suppression techniques from Rule 403 are summarized as follows:

- Apply nontoxic chemical soil stabilizers according to manufacturers' specifications to all inactive construction areas (previously graded areas inactive for 10 days or more).
- Water active sites at least twice daily (locations where grading is to occur will be thoroughly watered prior to earthmoving).
- All trucks hauling demolished material, dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered or should maintain at least 2 feet of freeboard in accordance with the requirements of California Vehicle Code Section 23114 (freeboard means vertical space between the top of the load and top of the trailer).

Therefore, sensitive receptors are not expected to be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations during construction or operation and impacts are considered less than significant. No mitigation is proposed.

Air Quality Health Impacts. Adverse health effects induced by criteria pollutant emissions are highly dependent on a multitude of interconnected variables (e.g., cumulative concentrations, local meteorology and atmospheric conditions, and the number and character of exposed individual [e.g., age, gender]). In particular, ozone precursor's volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) affect air quality on a regional scale. Health effects related to ozone are therefore the product of emissions generated by numerous sources throughout a region. Existing models have limited sensitivity to small changes in criteria pollutant concentrations, and, as such, translating project-generated criteria pollutants to specific health effects or additional days of nonattainment would produce meaningless results. In other words, the project's less than significant increases in regional air pollution from criteria air pollutants would have nominal or negligible impacts on human health.

Further, as noted in the Brief of Amicus Curiae by the SCAQMD (April 6, 2015), the SCAQMD acknowledged it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to quantify health impacts of criteria pollutants for various reasons including modeling limitations as well as where in the atmosphere air pollutants interact and form.

The SCAQMD acknowledges that health effects quantification from ozone, as an example, is correlated with the increases in ambient level of ozone in the air (concentration) that an individual person breathes. SCAQMD's Brief of Amicus Curiae states that it would take a large amount of additional emissions to cause a modeled increase in ambient ozone levels over the entire region. The SCAQMD states that based on its own modeling in the SCAQMD's 2012 Air Quality Management Plan, a reduction of 432 tons (864,000 pounds) per day of NOx and a reduction of 187 tons (374,000 pounds) per day of VOCs would reduce ozone levels at highest

monitored site by only nine parts per billion. As such, the SCAQMD concludes that it is not currently possible to accurately quantify ozone-related health impacts caused by NOx or Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions from relatively small projects (defined as projects with regional scope) due to photochemistry and regional model limitations. Thus, as the project would not exceed SCAQMD thresholds for construction and would not generate operational air pollutant emissions, the project would not create health impacts related to air quality.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos. Asbestos is a term used for several types of naturally occurring fibrous minerals that are a human health hazard when airborne. The most common type of asbestos is chrysotile, but other types such as tremolite and actinolite are also found in California. Asbestos is classified as a known human carcinogen by State, federal, and international agencies and was identified as a toxic air contaminant by the California Air Resources Board in 1986.

Asbestos can be released from serpentine and ultramafic rocks when the rock is broken or crushed. At the point of release, the asbestos fibers may become airborne, causing air quality and human health hazards. These rocks have been commonly used for unpaved gravel roads, landscaping, fill projects, and other improvement projects in some localities. Asbestos may be released to the atmosphere due to vehicular traffic on unpaved roads, during grading for development projects, and at quarry operations. All of these activities may have the effect of releasing potentially harmful asbestos into the air. Natural weathering and erosion processes can act on asbestos bearing rock and make it easier for asbestos fibers to become airborne if such rock is disturbed. According to the Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology, *A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos Report* (August 2000), serpentine and ultramafic rocks are not known to occur within the project area. As a result, there would be no impact.

Therefore, sensitive receptors are not expected to be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations during construction or operation, and impacts are considered less than significant. No mitigation is proposed.

d) Would the project result in other emissions such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

No Impact. SCAQMD's *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* (1993) identifies various secondary significance criteria related to odorous air contaminants. Substantial odor-generating sources include land uses such as agricultural activities, feedlots, wastewater treatment facilities, landfills, or heavy manufacturing uses. Pursuant to SCAQMD Rule 402, these sources shall include a quantitative assessment of potential odors and meteorological conditions. The proposed project does not include any such uses or activities that would result in potentially significant odor impacts. Some objectionable odors may emanate from the operation of diesel-powered construction equipment and the laying down of asphalt during construction of the proposed project. However, these odors would be limited to the construction period and would disperse quickly; therefore, these odors would not be considered a significant impact.

The proposed project consists of road improvement and adding bike lanes, the operation of which would not produce objectionable odors once constructed. Therefore, no impacts related to other emissions, such as those leading to odors from the proposed project, would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

IV. Biological Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visits, Biological Resources Assessment and CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis (LSA 2020), CVMSHCP, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) pursuant Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Natural Diversity Data Base. RareFind, Online Edition, Version 5.2.14.

Regulatory Setting

Federal and Special-Status Species

Individual plant and animal species listed as Rare, Threatened, or Endangered under State and Federal Endangered Species Acts are considered "special-status species." Federal and State endangered species legislation has provided the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) with a mechanism for conserving and protecting plant and animal species of limited distribution and/or low or declining populations. Permits may be required from both the USFWS and CDFW if activities associated with a proposed project would result in the "take" of a species listed as threatened or endangered. To "take" a listed species, as defined by the State, is "to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill" said species. "Take" is more broadly defined by the Federal Endangered Species Act to include inflicting harm upon a listed species.

In addition to species listed under State and Federal Endangered Species Acts, Section 15380(b) and (c) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* provide that all potential rare or sensitive species, or habitats capable of supporting rare species, are considered for environmental review. These may include plant species of concern in the State listed by the California Native Plant Society and CDFW listed "Species of Special Concern."

Sensitive Habitats

Wetland and riparian habitats are considered to be sensitive habitats, and are protected under various Federal, State, and local regulations. These habitats are generally subject to regulation, protection, or consideration by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), CDFW, and/or the USFWS pursuant to Sections 303, 304, and 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act and the State of California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Wetland and riparian habitats are also subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates discharge into waters of the United States.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), the killing, possessing, or trading of migratory birds is prohibited unless exempt by regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. The MBTA prohibits the possession of protected bird species and their nests, regardless of whether nests are active.[9]

Birds of prey, such as owls and hawks, are protected in California under provisions of the State Fish and Game Code, which states that it is "unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the order Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto." Construction disturbance during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort is considered "taking" by the CDFW.

California Department of Fish and Game Code 3503

California Department of Fish and Game Code 3503 stipulates that is unlawful to take, posses, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.

Coachella Valley Association of Governments: Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP)

The project is located within the Coachella Valley Preserve, which is within the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). Specifically, the project lies within the Thousand Palms Conservation Area and the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area of the CVMSHCP.

[9] An active nest is defined as having eggs or young.

Riverside County General Plan

The Riverside County General Plan includes the proposed project area. The General Plan plans to conserve between 200,000 and 250,000 acres of land through land use designations. These conservation lands are incorporated into the General Plan incorporation of and consistency with the CVMSHCP. The County's General Plan includes the following goals and policies related to biological resources that are applicable to the proposed Project:

- OS 17.3 Enforce the provisions of applicable MSHCPs and implement related Riverside County policies when developing transportation or other infrastructure projects that have been designated as covered activities in the applicable MSHCP.
- OS 18.1 Preserve multi-species habitat resources in the County of Riverside through the enforcement of the provisions of applicable MSHCPs and through implementing related Riverside County policies.

Findings of Fact

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or indirectly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Threatened and Endangered Species. The project is located within the Coachella Valley Preserve, which is within the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). Specifically, the project lies within the Thousand Palms Conservation Area and the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area of the CVMSHCP.

One federally listed endangered plant species was identified during the literature search as potentially present in the project vicinity:

- Coachella Valley milkvetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae* [CVMV]): Federally listed endangered and CVMSHCP covered species.

Three federally and State listed wildlife species were identified during the literature search as potentially present in the project vicinity:

- Desert pupfish (*Cyprinodon macularius*): Federally and State listed endangered and CVMSHCP covered species;
- Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (*Uma inornata* [CVFTL]): Federally listed threatened, State-listed endangered, and CVMSHCP covered species; and
- Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus* [SWFL]): Federally and State-listed endangered and CVMSHCP covered species.

The Biological Study Area (BSA) was created to encompass the proposed project footprint and typical habitats in the immediate project vicinity that may be directly or indirectly affected by

the proposed project. The BSA includes Thousand Palms Canyon Road, associated right-of-way, proposed construction staging areas, all permanent and temporary impact areas related to the project and extends to 50 feet east and west of the project's limits of disturbance (Figure 3). The majority of the BSA is located within the Coachella Valley Preserve. Additionally, the BSA lies entirely within the planning boundaries of the CVMSHCP. Specifically, the BSA lies within the Thousand Palms Conservation Area and the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area.

Habitat within the BSA is considered unsuitable for desert pupfish, CVFTL, and SWFL. Although CVMV was not found to be present within the BSA, high quality habitat for CVMV was observed within the BSA at the time of the field survey. CVMV is a covered species under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). Through participation in the CVMSHCP, the project would mitigate for any impacts to CVMV.

Nonlisted Special-Status Species. The 17 special-interest species identified in the *Biological Resources Assessment and CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis* (LSA 2020) as having a low to high probability of occurrence in the BSA have limited population distribution in Southern California and development is further reducing their ranges and numbers. These species have no official State or federal protection status, but they merit consideration under CEQA. The project is anticipated to have a less than significant effect on these non-listed special-interest species. These species are:

- Abrams' spurge (*Euphorbia abramsiana*);
- Arizona spurge (*Euphorbia arizonica*);
- Flat-seeded spurge (*Euphorbia platysperma*);
- Narrow-leaf sandpaper plant (*Petalonyx linearis*);
- Mecca aster (*Xylorhiza cognate*);
- Cheeseweed moth lacewing (*Oliarces clara*);
- Flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcalli*);
- Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*);
- Prairie falcon (nesting) (*Falco mexicanus*);
- Loggerhead shrike (nesting) (*Lanius ludovicianus*);
- Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*);
- Pallid San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax pallidus*);
- Palm Springs pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris bangsii*); and
- Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus*).

CVMSHCP-designated Other Conserved habitat for burrowing owl and Le Conte's thrasher is present within the BSA.

Nesting birds (e.g. burrowing owl and Le Conte's thrasher) are protected by California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3800, and by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 USC 703–711). These laws regulate the take, possession, or destruction of the nest or eggs of any migratory bird or bird of prey.

To ensure compliance with California Fish and Game Code, and to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds, it is recommended that the vegetation removal activities be conducted outside the general bird nesting season (January 15 through August 31) (refer to Mitigation Measure BIO-1 and BIO-2, below). If vegetation cannot be removed outside the bird nesting season, a pre-construction nesting bird survey by a qualified biologist is required prior to vegetation removal.

Critical Habitat. The southern portion of the project lies within mapped federally designated Critical Habitat for CVFTL (USFWS, 45 FR: 63812). The CVFTL is a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP, Take Authorization is provided through the permits issued in conjunction with the CVMSHCP Implementation Agreement. Through participation in the CVMSHCP, the project would not adversely affect CVFTL critical habitat. The CVMSHCP Conservation Area for this project is shown in Figure 3.

The project would result in a less than significant impact to non-listed species through the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact. Vegetation within the BSA is best described as *Larrea tridentata* Shrubland Alliance (Creosote Bush Shrubland) (Sawyer et al. 2009). Dominant species include creosote bush, white bur-sage (*Ambrosia dumosa*), and brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*). Other natural communities observed within the BSA include *Atriplex polycarpa* Shrubland Alliance (Allscale Shrubland); *Suaeda moquinii* Shrubland Alliance (Bush Seepweed Shrubland); *Prosopis glandulosa* Shrubland Alliance (Mesquite thickets); and *Washingtonia filifera* Woodland Alliance (California fan palm oasis) (Sawyer et al. 2009). Figure 4 shows the vegetation and land use within the BSA. *Prosopis glandulosa* Shrubland Alliance (Mesquite thickets), and *Washingtonia filifera* Woodland Alliance (California fan palm oasis) are the only two sensitive natural communities present within the BSA. Although riparian habitat is present within the BSA, the County will only be working within the right-of-way (ROW) and no impacts to riparian habitat will occur. Vegetation associated with the sensitive communities will not be removed. Any vegetation that may be removed within County ROW will not be suitable nesting or foraging habitat for sensitive species. Because the project would be constructed entirely within the County ROW, the project would not affect these sensitive communities and the project would result in no impacts to natural communities.

LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

Coachella Valley milk-vetch

0 100 200
FEET

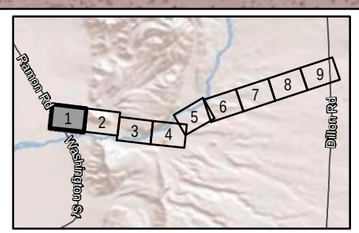

FIGURE 3
Sheet 1 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Critical Habitat

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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Thousand Palms Canyon Rd

LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200
FEET

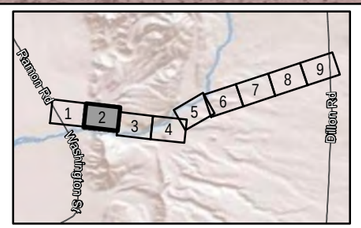

FIGURE 3
Sheet 2 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project
Critical Habitat

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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Thousand Palms Canyon Rd

LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

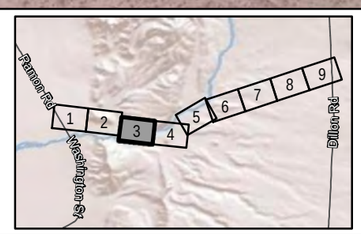
Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200

FEET



SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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FIGURE 3

Sheet 3 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Critical Habitat

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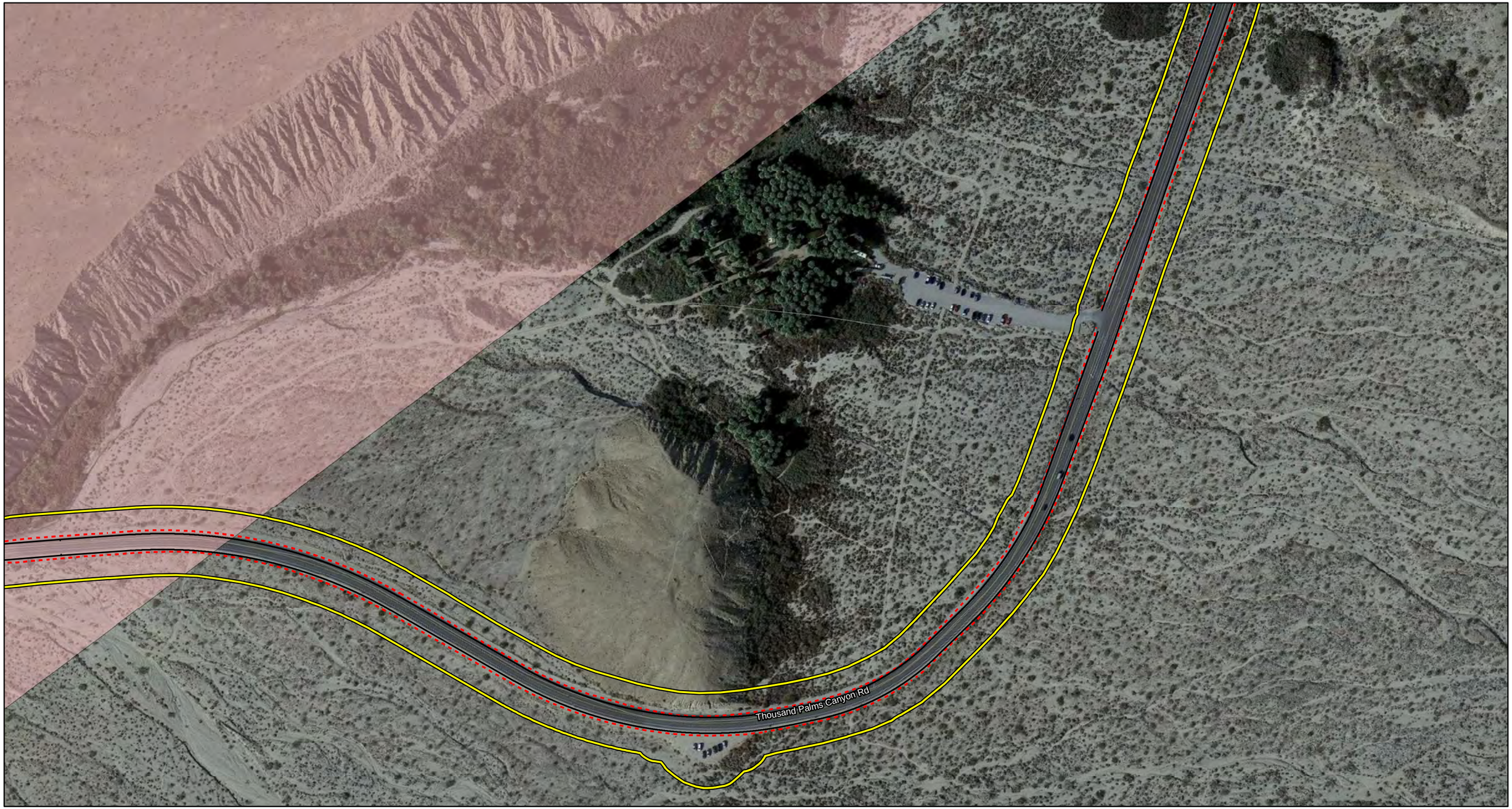

LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200

FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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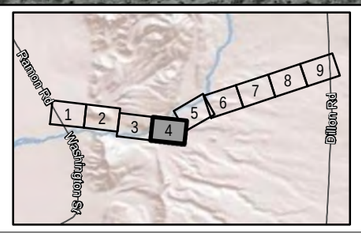

FIGURE 3

Sheet 4 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Critical Habitat

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200
FEET

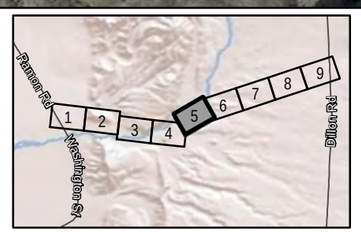

FIGURE 3
Sheet 5 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project
Critical Habitat

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200
FEET

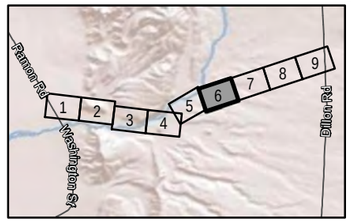

FIGURE 3
Sheet 6 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project
Critical Habitat

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

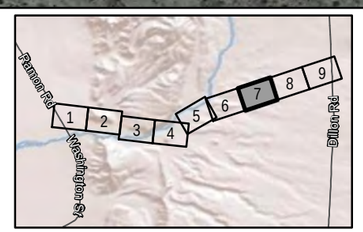
Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200

FEET



SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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FIGURE 3

Sheet 7 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Critical Habitat

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200

FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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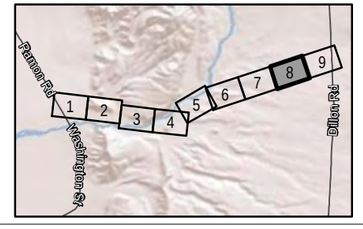

FIGURE 3

Sheet 8 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Critical Habitat

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Proposed Improvements

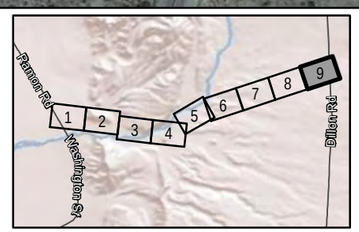
Edge of Proposed Roadway

Cut and Fill

Critical Habitat

Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard

0 100 200
FEET



SOURCE: Google Earth (2018); US Fish and Wildlife Service (6/2020)

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FIGURE 3

Sheet 9 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Critical Habitat

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LSA

LEGEND

- Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

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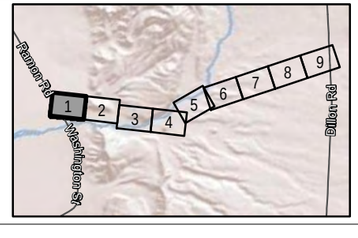

FIGURE 4
Sheet 1 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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Thousand Palms Canyon Rd

LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

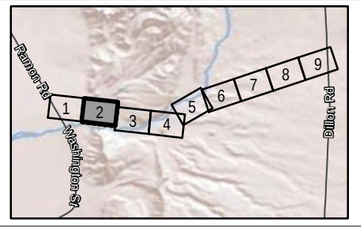

FIGURE 4
Sheet 2 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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Thousand Palms Canyon Rd

LSA

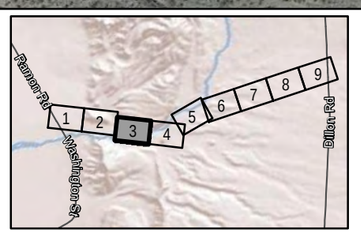
LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET



SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

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FIGURE 4
Sheet 3 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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Thousand Palms Canyon Rd

LSA

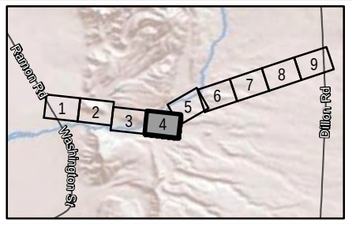
LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET



SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

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FIGURE 4
Sheet 4 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

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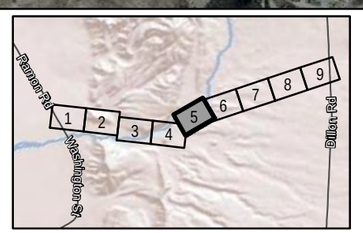

FIGURE 4
Sheet 5 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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LSA

LEGEND

- Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

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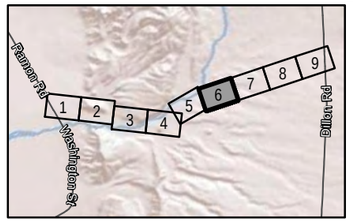

FIGURE 4
Sheet 6 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

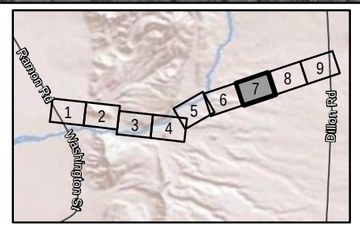

FIGURE 4
Sheet 7 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project
Vegetation and Land Use

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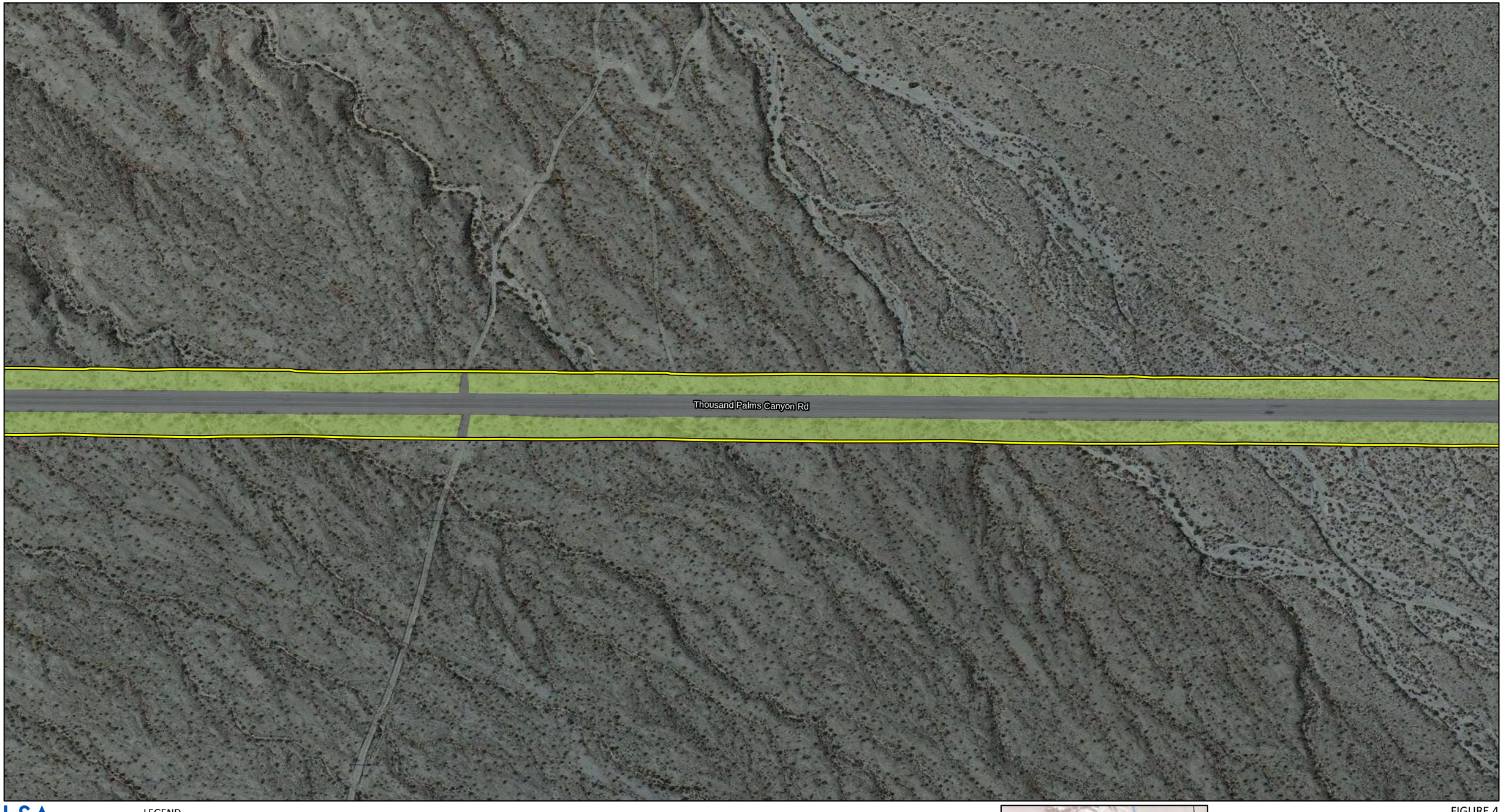

LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

Allscale Scrub

Bush Seepweed Scrub

California Fan Palm Oasis

Creosote Bush Scrub

Disturbed/Developed

Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200

FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

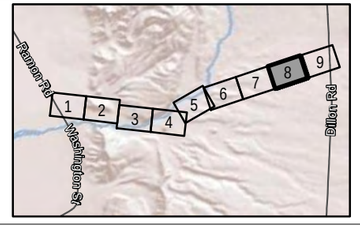

FIGURE 4

Sheet 8 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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LSA

LEGEND

Biological Study Area

Vegetation

- Allscale Scrub
- Bush Seepweed Scrub
- California Fan Palm Oasis
- Creosote Bush Scrub
- Disturbed/Developed
- Mesquite Thickets

0 100 200
FEET

SOURCE: Google Earth (2018)

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FIGURE 4
Sheet 9 of 9

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

Vegetation and Land Use

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Additionally, the southern portion of the project lies within mapped federally designated Critical Habitat for the federally listed threatened and State-listed endangered Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard (CVFTL) (USFWS, 45 FR: 63812). The CVFTL is a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP, Take Authorization is provided through the permits issued in conjunction with the CVMSHCP Implementation Agreement. Through participation in the CVMSHCP, the project would not adversely affect CVFTL critical habitat. Therefore, the project would result in a less than significant impact to natural communities and no mitigation is proposed.

The USACE regulates discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. These waters include wetlands and non-wetland bodies of water that meet specific criteria, including a direct or indirect connection to interstate commerce. The USACE regulatory jurisdiction pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA is founded on a connection, or nexus, between the water body in question and interstate commerce. This connection may be direct (through a tributary system linking a stream channel with traditional navigable waters used in interstate or foreign commerce), or it may be indirect (through a nexus identified in the USACE regulations). In order to be considered a jurisdictional wetland under Section 404, an area must possess three wetland characteristics, each with its unique set of mandatory wetland criteria: hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology.

The CDFW, under Sections 1600 through 1616 of the California Fish and Game Code, regulates alterations to lakes, rivers, and streams (defined by the presence of a channel bed and banks, and at least an intermittent flow of water) where fish or wildlife resources may be adversely affected.

The RWQCB is responsible for the administration of Section 401 of the CWA. Typically, the areas subject to jurisdiction of the RWQCB coincide with those of the USACE (i.e., waters of the U.S., including any wetlands). The RWQCB may also assert authority over “waters of the State” under waste discharge requirements pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Act (Act), which is defined under the Act as “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state.”

Based on the results of the jurisdictional delineation, the BSA does not contain potential wetland or non-wetland waters of the United States subject to the regulatory authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) pursuant to Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA). However, the BSA does contain approximately 4.35 acres of potential streambed and 0.24 acre of riparian vegetation subject to the regulatory authority of California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Drainage 1 and the ephemeral drainages within the BSA may be subject to the State’s Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

The project will not affect CDFW riparian habitat; however, the project is anticipated to permanently affect approximately 0.015 acre and temporarily affect approximately 0.012 acre of CDFW streambed. Therefore, with implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-03, as detailed below, the project would result in a less than significant impact to riparian resources.

c) Have 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. Based on the results of the jurisdictional delineation, the BSA does not contain potential wetland or non-wetland waters of the United States subject to the regulatory authority of the USACE pursuant Section 404 of the CWA. However, it does contain approximately 4.35 acres of potential streambed and 0.24 acre of riparian vegetation subject to the regulatory authority of CDFW and the project is anticipated to permanently affect approximately 0.015 acre of CDFW streambed; therefore, it is subject to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

The project will not affect CDFW riparian habitat. Therefore, the project would result in a less than significant impact to riparian resources with no mitigation proposed.

Under Section b, the CDFW Streambed Alteration Agreement is discussed.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native or resident migratory wildlife corridors, or impeded the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less Than Significant Impact. Wildlife movement and habitat fragmentation are important issues in assessing effects to wildlife. Habitat fragmentation occurs when a proposed action results in a single, unified habitat area being divided into two or more areas such that the division isolates the two new areas from each other. Isolation of habitat occurs when wildlife cannot move freely from one portion of the habitat to another or from one habitat type to another. An example is the fragmentation of habitats within and around "checkerboard" residential development. Habitat fragmentation can also occur when a portion of one or more habitats is converted into another habitat, as when scrub habitats are converted into annual grassland habitat because of frequent burning.

Local wildlife movement may be temporarily disrupted during any vegetation removal associated with construction, but this effect would be localized and short term. Therefore, the project would result in a less than significant impact to wildlife movement with no mitigation required.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Per Riverside County Ordinance 559, "No person shall remove any living native tree on any parcel or property greater than one-half acre in size, located in an area above 5,000 feet in elevation and within the unincorporated area of the County of Riverside, without first obtaining a permit to do so." The project will not impact any native trees above 5,000 feet. Further, through participation in the CVMSHCP, the project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances; therefore, no mitigation is proposed.

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?

No Impact. The CVMSHCP is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on the conservation of species and their associated habitats in the Coachella Valley region of Riverside County. The overall goal of the CVMSHCP is to maintain and enhance biological diversity and ecosystem processes within the region while allowing for future economic growth. As described in the *Biological Resources Assessment and CVMSHCP Consistency Analysis* (LSA April 2020), the project lies within the Thousand Palms and Indio Hills/ Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Areas of the CVMSHCP. The project is subject to the requirements of the CVMSHCP and there is no impact on the plan.

Mitigation pertaining to the Entire Biological Resources Section

BIO-1: Pre-construction Le Conte's Thrasher Survey. In order to avoid impacts to the Le Conte's thrasher, per the CVMSHCP during the nesting season (January 15 through August 31), prior to the start of construction activities, surveys shall be conducted by an acceptable biologist on the construction site and within 500 feet of the construction site, or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet. If nesting Le Conte's thrashers are found, a 500-foot Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet, shall be established around the nest site. The ESA shall be staked and flagged. No construction shall be permitted within the ESA during the breeding season of January 15 through August 31 or until the young have fledged.

BIO-2: Pre-construction Burrowing Owl Survey. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey would be conducted in all areas of suitable habitat within project limit using an accepted protocol. Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall survey the construction area including a 500-foot buffer, or to the edge of the property if less than 500 feet, for burrows that could be used by burrowing owl. If a burrow is located, the biologist shall determine whether an owl is present in the burrow. If the burrow is determined to be occupied, the burrow shall be flagged and a 160-foot buffer during the non-breeding season or a 250-foot buffer during the breeding season or a buffer to the edge of the property boundary if less than 500 feet shall be established around the burrow. The buffer area shall be staked and flagged. No development activities shall be permitted within the buffer until the young are no longer dependent on the burrow.

BIO-3: Prior to commencement of construction activities for permanent impacts in jurisdictional features, the project shall obtain authorizations from the RWQCB pursuant to *Procedures for Discharge for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State* or *State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ* and from the CDFW pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code have been obtained.

The type, amount, and location of any required mitigation (including payment of fees or purchase of credits) shall be established by each regulatory agency during the review of any required authorization. As determined appropriate by each agency, the following shall be incorporated into required permit(s):

1. Off-site replacement and/or restoration of RWQCB jurisdictional "waters of the State" within the Colorado River Watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 or within an adjacent watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts, and for any temporary impacts to restore the impact area to pre-project conditions (i.e., pre-project contours and revegetate where applicable). Off-site mitigation may occur on land acquired for the purpose of in-perpetuity preservation, or through the purchase of mitigation credits at an agency-approved off-site mitigation bank.
2. Off-site replacement and/or restoration of CDFW jurisdictional streambed and associated riparian habitat within the Colorado River Watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 or within an adjacent watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts, and for any temporary impacts to restore the impact area to pre-project conditions (i.e., pre-project contours and revegetate where applicable). Off-site mitigation may occur on land acquired for the purpose of in-perpetuity preservation, or through the purchase of mitigation credits at an agency-approved off-site mitigation bank.

BIO-4: Worker Environmental Awareness Program. A Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) shall be implemented for work crews by a qualified biologist(s) prior to the commencement of construction activities and prior to site access by workers. Training materials and briefings shall include but not be limited to, discussion of the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts, the CVMSHCP, the consequences of noncompliance with project permitting requirements, identification and values of special-status plant and wildlife species and sensitive natural plant community habitats, fire protection measures, and hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures.

V. Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Source(s): Eastern Information Center (EIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 36, Part 79, 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 79, Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), Cultural Resource Assessment

Note: The discussion of Native American consultation and Tribal Cultural Resources is addressed separately (refer to Checklist Question 8).

Regulatory Setting

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) lists the historic significance and the eligibility for qualifying for such significance for a building, structure, or other site. Significance eligibility is determined based on the quality and integrity of the resource and its association to American history, architecture, and culture. The resources must also possess one or more of the following characteristics:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history; or
2. It is associated with the lives of persons significant to our past; or
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)

The California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) operates similarly to the NRHP with almost the same structure for determining significance eligibility for potential historical resources. Generally, a resource is eligible for historical status under CRHR if it is greater than 50 years old as well as meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Public Resources Code Section 5097.5

California PRC Section 5097.5(a) mandates that one cannot, "knowingly and willfully" excavate, remove, or destroy any "historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site," or "any other archaeological, paleontological or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over the lands." PRC Section 5097.5(b) defines public lands as those that are owned by or under the jurisdiction of any state or public authority or agency.

Riverside County General Plan

The County's General Plan includes the following goals and policies related to cultural that are applicable to the proposed Project:

- OS 19.1 Cultural resources (both prehistoric and historic) are a valued part of the history of the County of Riverside.
- OS 19.5 Exercise sensitivity and respect for human remains from both prehistoric and historic time periods and comply with all applicable laws concerning such remains.

Findings of Fact

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5 (From California Environmental Quality Act: Determining the Significance of Impacts to Archaeological and Historical Resources)?

No Impact. A literature and records search was conducted for the proposed project at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at the University of California, Riverside. This search indicates 22 previous cultural resource investigations and 26 cultural resources documented within 1 mile of the Thousand Palms Canyon Road Project area. Four of the 26 previously identified cultural resources are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area, including a prehistoric trail segment (CA-RIV-531), prehistoric village site (CA-RIV-56), prehistoric isolate (33-012245), and a segment of historic-period Dillon Road (33-008410).

A review of historical maps indicates that the Thousand Palms Canyon Road was utilized as a wagon road leading to the Thousand Palms Oasis during the 1920s. By the 1930s, the existing dirt road was well traveled by campers in automobiles. At this time, the dirt road that was passable by automobile ended at the Thousand Palms Oasis. Beyond that point, the canyon route that led up and met Dillon Highway (now Dillon Road), was only a dirt trail. In the early 1950s, Riverside County built a new, gravel road and rerouted the existing dirt road around the Thousand Palms Oasis. The entire road was paved in 1961.

The project does not require the acquisition of right-of-way. The proposed widening will be within the existing alignment of Thousand Plans Canyon Road. Upon completion, the proposed project will serve a similar use, will be constructed within the same alignment and within the existing right-of-way, and will not remove or alter any historical features; therefore, there is no impact to historic resources and no mitigation is proposed.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. An intensive pedestrian survey of the project area was conducted on December 10 and 11, 2019. An attempt was made to re-identify the previously recorded cultural resources located within or adjacent to the project area. Three of the cultural resources (CA-RIV-53T, CA-RIV-56, 33-012245) could not be identified. However, Dillon Highway (33-008410) was confirmed to be in the same condition as originally recorded.

Archaeological resources were located within or near the proposed project during the records search and through archaeological field surveys. The majority of the Project area is within the ROW of the modern Thousand Palms Canyon Road. None of the mapped soil series in the Project area has a buried A (Ab) horizon and all the soils lack well-developed A and B soil horizons. The depth for roadway construction is 3 feet below ground surface (bgs). These construction-related activities are unlikely to affect intact and significant buried archaeological resources because of the lack of well-developed soils within the Project area. However, a portion of the Project area (approximately 1.2 miles) is located within the recorded boundaries of prehistoric site CA-RIV-56. While no artifacts associated with CA-RIV-56 were observed within the Project area during Æ's survey, no survey of the full extent of the site has been conducted to date. In addition, an accurate site map has never been prepared for CA-RIV-56, and the exact extent of the site boundary remains undetermined.

Therefore, archaeological monitoring is recommended for the portion of the Project within CA-RIV-56 not previously subjected to Extended Phase I (XPI) studies.

Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-6 have been identified to reduce potential impacts associated with such an inadvertent discovery to a less than significant level. For Measures CUL-1 through CUL-6, in the event that potentially significant archaeological materials are encountered during monitoring of construction, all work shall be halted in the vicinity of the discovery until the discovery has been assessed for significance and integrity of the find. If intact and significant archaeological remains are encountered, the impacts of the project must be mitigated appropriately. Any such discoveries, and subsequent evaluation and treatment, should be documented in a cultural resource report, which would be submitted to the EIC for archival purposes.

c) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. Based on the archival research, there is no evidence that the project area has been used for human burials. No evidence of

human burials was observed during the pedestrian surveys of the project area. Due to the lack of formal cemeteries or informal burial plots within project area, there is a low potential that human remains would be uncovered during grading and other construction activities.

In the unlikely event human remains are discovered, compliance with State law (Health and Safety Code § 7050.5) (HSC § 7050.5) would be required. These requirements state that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin. Further, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 (b), remains shall be left in place and free from disturbance until a final decision as to the treatment and their disposition has been made.

Human remains from other ethnic/cultural groups with recognized historical associations to the project area shall also be subject to consultation between appropriate representatives from that group and the County. Mitigation CUL-6 has been identified to reduce potential impacts associated with such an inadvertent discovery to a less than significant level.

Mitigation pertaining to the Entire Cultural Resources Section:

CUL-1: Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan. The Project Archaeologist, in consultation with the Monitoring Tribe(s), and the County shall develop a Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan (CRMP) to address the details, timing, and responsibility of all archaeological and cultural activities that will occur on the project site. Details in the CRMP shall include:

- Project grading and development scheduling.
- The coordination of a monitoring schedule as agreed upon by the Monitoring Tribe(s), the Project Archaeologist, and the County.
- The protocols and stipulations that the County, Monitoring Tribe(s), and Project Archaeologist shall follow in the event of inadvertent cultural resources discoveries, including any newly discovered cultural resources. They have the authority to stop all work within 60 feet of the find.

CUL-2: Train Construction Personnel. Prior to any grading, excavation, and/or other ground-disturbing activities on the project site, the Project Archaeologist and the Monitoring Tribe(s) shall conduct cultural resources sensitivity training for all construction personnel. Construction personnel shall be informed of the types of archaeological resources that may be encountered and of the proper procedures to be enacted in the event of an inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources or human remains. The County's construction manager shall ensure that construction personnel are made available for and attend the training, and shall retain documentation demonstrating attendance.

CUL-3: Monitoring. All artifacts/cultural material discovered at the project site shall be inventoried and analyzed by the Project Archaeologist and Native American tribal monitor(s). If any cultural materials of Native American origin are discovered, all activities in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot radius) shall stop. The Project Archaeologist and Native American tribal monitor(s) shall analyze the Native American cultural materials for identification as everyday life and/or religious or sacred

items, cultural affiliation, temporal placement, and function, as deemed possible. The significance of Native American resources shall be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and shall consider the religious beliefs, customs, and practices of the tribe(s). All items found in association with Native American human remains shall be considered grave goods or sacred in origin and subject to special handling.

CUL-4: Inadvertent Discoveries. In the event that Native American cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during the course of grading for this project, the following procedures shall be carried out for the treatment and disposition of the discoveries:

- Curation: The County shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources. Native American cultural materials that cannot be avoided or relocated at the project site shall be prepared for curation. The Project Archaeologist, following consultation with the Monitoring Tribe(s), shall deliver the materials to a qualified repository in Riverside County that meets or exceeds federal standards per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 36, Part 79, and that shall be made available to all qualified researchers and tribal representatives.
- Temporary On-Site Curation and Storage: During the course of construction, all discovered resources shall be secured on site in the mobile office. The removal of any cultural materials from the project site will need to be thoroughly inventoried, with Native American Tribal Monitor oversight of the process.
- Treatment and Final Disposition: The County shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources, including sacred items, burial goods, and all cultural materials and nonhuman remains, as part of the required mitigation for impacts to cultural resources within the County right-of-way. The County shall relinquish the cultural materials through the following method and provide the cultural materials to the Consulting Tribe(s):
    - For on-site reburial of the discovered items this shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from any future impacts. Reburial shall not occur until all cataloguing and basic recordation have been completed.

CUL-5: Reporting. The Project Archaeologist shall prepare a final archaeological report within 60 days of project completion. The report shall follow Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP) Guidelines and County requirements and shall include at a minimum: a discussion of monitoring methods and techniques used; the results of the monitoring program, including any cultural materials recovered; an inventory of any resources recovered; updated State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms, if any, and any other site(s) identified; final disposition of the resources; and any additional recommendations. A final copy shall be submitted to the County, the Eastern Information Center, and the Monitoring Tribe(s).

CUL-6: Discovery of Human Remains. In the event human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur and halt all work within 60 feet until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be

Native American, the County Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The archaeologist who discovered the remains will contact the County so that they may work with the MLD to inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD will have the opportunity to offer recommendations for the disposition of the remains.

VI. Energy

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): California Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (2006), California Air Resources Board (ARB), County of Riverside Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update (November 2019).

Regulatory Setting

USEPA establishes energy standards at the federal level. USEPA also establishes fuel efficiency standards for automobiles and other modes of transportation.

Renewables Portfolio Standard Program

Established in 2002 under Senate Bill 1078, California established its Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS) Program, which was accelerated in 2006 under Senate Bill 107. The RPS required 20 percent of electricity sales to be served by renewable energy sources by 2010. In 2008, Executive Order S-14-08 was signed into law requiring retail sellers of electricity to serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020. In October 2015, Senate Bill (SB) 350 was enacted to codify California's climate and clean energy goals. SB 350 requires retail sellers of electricity and publicly owned utilities to procure 50 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2030.[10]

California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design and construction standards through Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), known as the California Building Code (CBC). The CBC is updated every three years, and the current 2016 CBC went into effect in January 2017. Compliance with Title 24 is mandatory at the time new building permits are issued by local governments. Generally, the CBC is adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions.

The California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) adopted Part 11 of the Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards (also referred to as the California Green Building Standards Code, or CALGreen) in 2010 as part of the State's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and reducing energy consumption from residential and nonresidential buildings. CALGreen code covers the following five categories: (1) planning and design, (2) energy efficiency, (3) water efficiency and conservation, (4) material conservation and resource efficiency, and (5) indoor environmental quality.

[10] California Energy Commission. Renewable Portfolio Standard. Website: https://www.energy.ca.gov/portfolio/ (accessed February 12, 2019).

Findings of Fact

a) Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would include improvements to the Thousand Palms Canyon Road. Consumption of energy resources would occur during construction. Heavy-duty construction equipment associated with demolition and construction activities for construction would rely on diesel fuel, as would vendor trucks involved in delivery of materials to the project site. Construction workers would travel to and from the project site throughout the duration of construction. It is assumed in this analysis that construction workers would travel to and from the site in gasoline-powered light-duty vehicles.

Heavy-duty construction equipment of various types would be used during each phase of project construction. The RoadMod provided a default list of the equipment and operating hour usage for each phase of construction. The project's construction equipment is estimated to operate a total combined 7,445 hours for a 2-month period.

Fuel consumption from construction equipment was estimated by converting the total carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from each construction phase to gallons using the conversion factors for CO_2 to gallons of gasoline or diesel. Construction is anticipated to occur in 2021. The conversion factor for gasoline is 8.78 kilograms per metric ton CO_2 per gallon, and the conversion factor for diesel is 10.21 kilograms per metric ton of CO_2 per gallon.[11]

Table F shows the estimated diesel fuel usage from construction equipment.

Table F: Construction Equipment Diesel Demand

Phase	Piece of Equipment	Equipment CO_2 (MT)	Kg/CO_2/Gallon	Gallons
Grubbing/Land Clearing	13	4.13	10.21	404.51
Grading/Excavation	25	76.65	10.21	7,507.35
Drainage/Utilities/Subgrade	20	30.15	10.21	2,952.99
Paving	17	7.57	10.21	741.43
			Total	**11,606.27**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (January 2021). kg/CO_2/Gallon (The Climate Registry 2020).
Notes: CO_2 = carbon dioxide; MT = metric ton; kg = kilogram.

Fuel consumption from worker- and vendor-truck trips are estimated by converting the total CO_2 emissions from each construction phase to gallons using the conversion factors for CO_2 to gallons of gasoline or diesel. A total of approximately 192 worker vehicle trips and 35 haul truck trips would occur at the proposed project site. Worker vehicles are assumed to be gasoline and vendor vehicles are assumed to be diesel. Tables G and H provide calculations for daily worker- and vendor-truck fuel consumption for a 2-month maintenance period.

[11] The Climate Registry. 2020 default emission factors. https://www.theclimateregistry.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Climate-Registry-2020-Default-Emission-Factor-Document.pdf.

Table G: Construction Worker Gasoline Demand

Phase	VMT/day	Vehicle MT CO_2	Kg/CO_2/Gallon	Gallons
Grubbing/Land Clearing	680	0.94	8.78	107.06
Grading/Excavation	1,280	7.98	8.78	908.88
Drainage/Utilities/Subgrade	1,000	4.15	8.78	472.67
Paving	880	1.83	8.78	208.43
			Total	**1,697.04**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (January 2021). kg/CO_2/Gallon (The Climate Registry 2020)
Notes: CO_2 = carbon dioxide; MT = metric ton; kg = kilogram.

Table H: Construction Vendor and Haul Truck Diesel Demand

Phase	Vendor Trips/day	Total Haul Truck VMT/period	Vehicle MT CO_2	Kg/CO_2/Gallon	Gallons
Grubbing/Land Clearing	1	40	0.33	10.21	32.32
Grading/Excavation	7	220	7.38	10.21	722.82
Drainage/Utilities/Subgrade	4	130	2.91	10.21	285.01
Paving	7	220	2.46	10.21	240.94
				Total	**1,281.10**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (January 2021). kg/CO_2/Gallon (The Climate Registry 2020)
Notes: CO_2 = carbon dioxide; MT = metric ton; kg = kilogram.

In summary, construction of the project is conservatively anticipated to consume 1,697 gallons of gasoline and 12,887 gallons of diesel (including equipment and haul/vendor trucks), which would be consumed over approximately two months. By comparison, California's consumption of petroleum is approximately 74.8 million gallons per day. Based on these assumptions, approximately 32.9 billion gallons of petroleum would be consumed in California over the course of the construction period.[12] Limiting construction equipment idling would ensure energy use is efficient and not wasteful or unnecessary during project construction. As such, the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact and no mitigation is proposed.

b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy resources or energy efficiency?

No Impact. California Assembly Bill (AB) 32 in 2006, required the ARB develop a climate change scoping plan that included directives for local governments to reduce GHG emissions associated with land use 15 percent below baseline levels by 2020. The County adopted its first CAP in 2015 that included GHG inventories of communitywide and municipal sources using the baseline data for the year 2008. The 2015 CAP included the GHG reduction target of 15 percent below 2008 levels by 2020. The inventory baseline year 2008, was established as a starting point against which other inventories may be compared and targets may be set, and was the earliest year with a full emissions inventory. As recommended in the AB 32 Scoping Plan, the County had set a target to reduce emissions back to 1990 levels by the year 2020. Based on the County's socioeconomic growth projections pursuant to the 2015 General Plan Update, this target was

[12] U.S. Energy Information Administration. 2020. California Profile Data https://www.eia.gov/state/data.php?sid=CA#ConsumptionExpenditures.

calculated as a 15 percent decrease from 2008 levels by 2020 and was determined sufficient for the County to meet the AB 32 target. The most recent inventory has the most relevant data for planning purposes, whereas multiple inventory years provide context and may help identify trends or anomalies in the community emissions.

According to the *County of Riverside Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update* (November 2019), the County committed to planning sustainably for the future while ensuring a livable, equitable, and economically vibrant community. Planning sustainably included "acknowledging the local role in climate change and the ways in which the County can mitigate the GHG emissions resulting from the County's growth and development in different economic sectors. By using energy more efficiently, harnessing renewable energy to power buildings, recycling waste, and enhancing access to sustainable transportation modes, Riverside County can keep dollars in its local economy, create new green jobs, and improve the community's health, safety, and welfare in addition to addressing climate change."

The County has implemented a number of sustainability and conservation efforts and seeks to continue those efforts through local planning and partnerships. The CAP update integrates the County's past and current efforts with its future efforts to grow and thrive sustainably. Moreover, this project does not conflict with the CAP and it is not a capacity-increasing project. There are no impacts and no mitigation is proposed.

GHG emissions associated with the project would occur over the short term from construction activities, consisting primarily of emissions from equipment and vehicle exhaust. The calculation presented in Table I under the Greenhouse Gas Emissions section of this report, includes construction emissions in terms of annual carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) GHG emissions.

VII. Geology and Soils

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP), Paleontological Mitigation Plan (PMP), Riverside County General Plan, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (www.websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov).

Regulatory Setting

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning ActFollowing the 1971 San Fernando earthquake, the State legislature passed the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning (AP) Act, which regulates developments near known active faults due to hazards associated with surface ruptures. Pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, development areas in or near the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone require evaluation for potential surface ruptures in order to ensure public safety.

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

The State legislature passed the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (SHMA) to ensure public safety in regard to the effects of strong ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, and other seismic hazards.

Pursuant to the SHMA, the California Geological Survey (CGS) has established a statewide mapping program for cities and counties to aid in identifying areas subject to these seismic hazards.

California Public Resources Code Section 5097.5

Section 5097.5 of the California Public Resources Code prohibits the excavation, removal, destruction, or tampering with any paleontological resources situated on public lands, except with the express permission of a public agency with jurisdiction over the lands.

Findings of Fact for Questions a, b, c, d, e, f: No Impact

The project site is in a seismically active region. The San Andreas Fault runs through the project site (Figure 5). Since the project traverses the San Andreas Fault there is the potential for the fault to rupture and displace the roadway; however, this is an existing condition that cannot be mitigated. The roadway improvements would not exacerbate the existing condition nor will it add additional traffic to the road. The proposed project would not result in the construction of habitable structures.

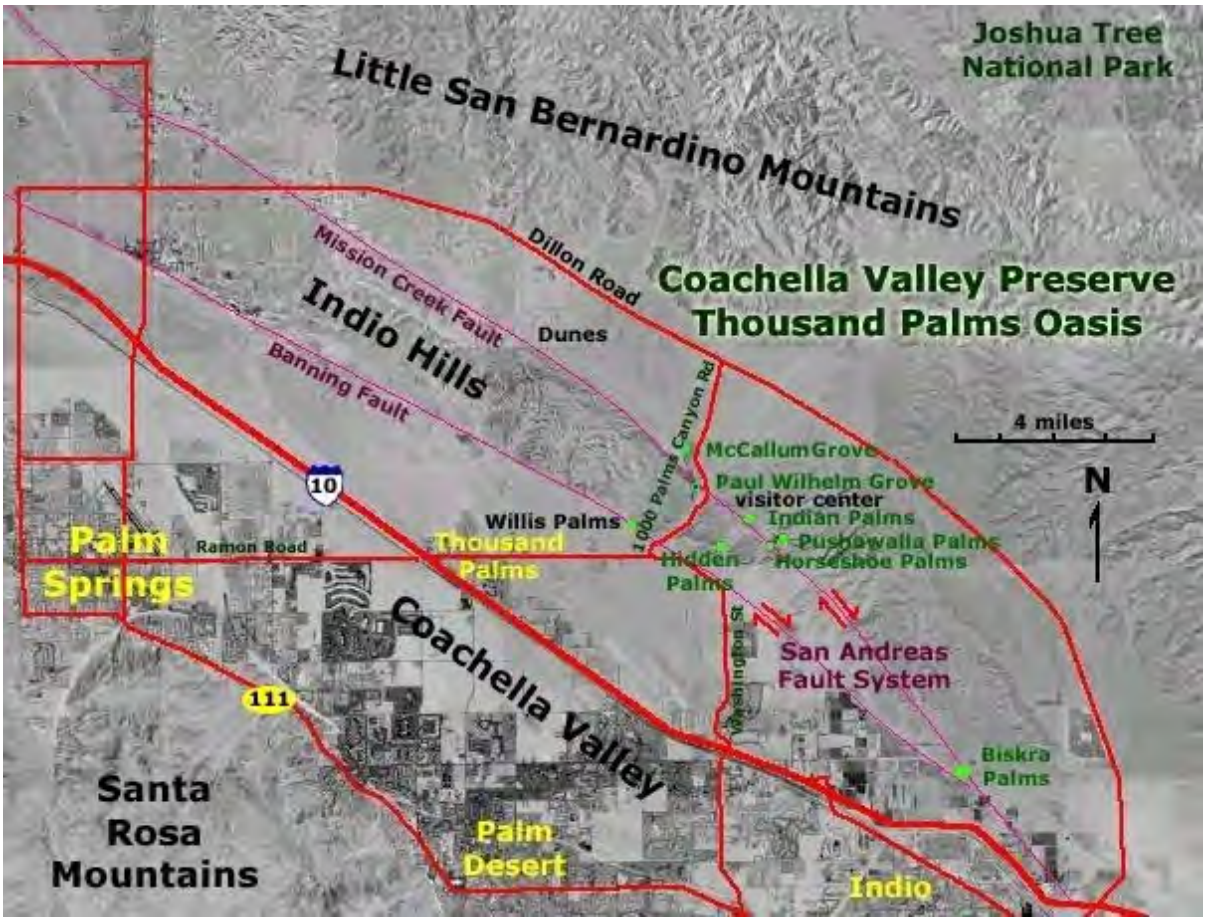

Figure 5: Map showing fault lines running through the Coachella Valley Preserve

Faults in the project area are believed to be able to produce earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 7.0. Depending on soil conditions and location within the site, the computed ground motion (i.e., peak ground acceleration) in the project area could reach or exceed 0.67g (the acceleration due to Earth's gravity, equivalent to g-force), which could cause significant damage to dwellings and structures not designed to withstand earthquakes.

Liquefaction involves a sudden loss in strength of a saturated, cohesionless soil (e.g., predominantly sand, low-plasticity silts, or sand/silt mixtures) caused by cyclic loading such as an earthquake. This results in temporary transformation of the soil to a fluid mass. Typically, liquefaction occurs in areas where groundwater is less than about 60 feet from the surface and where the soils are composed predominantly of poorly consolidated fine sands, silty sands, and nonplastic silts.

No habitable structures that could be affected by liquefaction are proposed as part of the project. The risk for liquefaction in the project area would typically be higher than normal due to the presence of loose and sandy soils; however, the groundwater is over 200 feet deep. Therefore, no impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

A review of topographic maps, geologic maps, and aerial photographs did not reveal evidence of existing or ancient landslides. The natural slopes appear to be globally stable by visual inspection and do not exhibit signs of surficial instability. Therefore, because natural slopes in the area are globally stable, no special precautions or restrictions during operation of the proposed project would be required. As the proposed project is not expected to be exposed to a landslide hazard, no impact related to this issue would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (www.websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov) soils in the project area include Dello loamy fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, Grangeville loamy fine sand, drained, 0 to 5 percent slopes; Grangeville fine sandy loam, poorly drained, saline-alkali; Riverwash; Tujunga loamy sand, channeled, 0 to 8 percent slopes; Tujunga gravelly loamy sand, 0 to 8 percent slopes; and Vista coarse sandy loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes, eroded. The soils in the project area are characterized by moderate erodibility. Soils are classified by the USDA NRCS into four hydrologic soil groups based on the soil's runoff potential. "Hydrologic soil group" is a term that represents a group of soils having similar runoff potential under similar storm and cover conditions. Soil properties that influence runoff potential are those that influence the minimum rate of infiltration for bare soil after prolonged wetting. The unconsolidated sediments in drainages are generally susceptible to erosion.

The proposed project would require replacement of some surface soils with concrete and pavement. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared and implemented prior to construction as required by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).[13] Operators of regulated construction sites are required to develop SWPPPs; to implement sediment, erosion, and pollution prevention control measures; and to obtain

[13] General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities [CGP], Order 2009-0009-DWQ, as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-0006-DWQ; NPDES No. CAS000002).

coverage under the CGP. The construction SWPPP would identify the specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented during construction so as not to cause or contribute to an exceedance of any applicable water quality standard included in the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (Colorado River Basin RWQCB) Basin Plan. These construction BMPs would be designed to meet the technology requirement stipulated in the CGP. Implementation of State and local requirements would result in no impact.

Liquefaction would normally be a potential hazard in the project area due to the soil composition but the risk of liquefaction is diminished by virtue of groundwater depth as noted above. Lateral spreading refers to ground or slope deformation due to the presence of weak or liquefiable soils in the subsurface combined with strong seismic shaking. Soft soils in the project area render the project susceptible to lateral spreading. However, appropriate design and construction standards would be followed and the project would not increase this risk over existing conditions, so there would be no impact.

Subsidence is the sudden sinking or gradual downward settling of the earth's surface with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence is caused by a variety of activities, which include (but are not limited to) withdrawal of groundwater, pumping of oil and gas from underground, collapse of underground mines, liquefaction, and hydrocompaction. The proposed project does not include the withdrawal of groundwater or other resources from underground sources.

Settlement ("seismic compaction") of loose to medium-dense, clean, dry sands can occur during seismic shaking. Due to shallow and sporadic loose to medium-dense zones of limited thickness, seismic compaction settlements are considered a negligible hazard. Adherence to specific design recommendations would ensure that no impacts related to on-site or off-site lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would occur.

Expansive soils generally have a significant amount of clay particles, which can give up water (shrink) or take on water (swell). The change in volume exerts stress on buildings and other loads placed on these soils. The extent of shrink/swell is influenced by the amount and kind of clay in the soil. The occurrence of these soils is often associated with geologic units having marginal stability. The distribution of expansive soils can be widely dispersed, and they can occur in hillside areas as well as low-lying alluvial basins. The USDA identifies the soils in the project area as potentially expansive; however, since this project would not create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property, no impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

The proposed project is a road improvement project that does not have a septic or alternative waste disposal system component. Therefore, alternative wastewater disposal systems would not be utilized and no impact related to this issue would occur.

The project area is not identified as containing unique paleontological resources; therefore, no impact is associated with this topic.

VIII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Global climate change (GCC), California Office of Planning and Research (OPR), California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), State's Assembly Bill (AB) 32, County of Riverside Climate Action Plan (CAP) Update (November 2019).

Regulatory Setting

Federal Clean Air Act

USEPA is responsible for implementing the FCAA, which was enacted in 1963. The FCAA was amended in 1970, 1977, and 1990. Under the FCAA, USEPA has the authority to regulate GHG emissions and prescribe actions to potentially reduce those emissions.

California Global Warming Solutions Act

The California Global Warming Solutions Act (also referred to as Assembly Bill [AB] 32) established a statewide GHG emissions cap for 2020, adopted reporting rules for significant sources of GHG, and adopted the Climate Change Scoping Plan, which itself identifies how GHG emissions reductions will be achieved.

In 2016, SB 32 was enacted, which amended the California Global Warming Solutions Act. SB 32 required the California Air Resources Board to ensure that GHG emissions are reduced to 40 percent below the 1990 level by 2030. ARB subsequently updated its Climate Change Scoping Plan in 2017 to express the 2030 statewide target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMT of CO_2e). Based on the emissions reductions directed by SB 32, the annual 2030 statewide target emissions level for California is 260 MMT of CO_2e.

Senate Bill 375-Redesigning Communities to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

SB 375, also known as the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Climate Protection Act, was enacted in September 2008. SB 375 builds on the foundation of AB 32 by requiring ARB to develop regional GHG emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicle and light-truck sectors for 2020 and 2035 as compared to 2005 levels.

South Coast Air Quality Management District

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) was created to ensure regional and local compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act and to implement the state air quality program. The

proposed project is within the Salton Sea Air Basin, administered by the SCAQMD and SCAG, and falls under the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). [14]

Riverside County General Plan

The Riverside County General Plan incorporates and complies with regulations from the SCAQMD and SCAG. The project area lies within the Salton Sea Air Basin, which is managed jointly by these agencies.

Technical Background

Global climate change (GCC) describes alterations in weather features (e.g., temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms) that occur across the Earth as a whole. Global temperatures are modulated by naturally occurring components in the atmosphere (e.g., water vapor, carbon dioxide [CO_2], methane [CH_4], and nitrous dioxide [N_2O]) that capture heat radiated from the Earth's surface, which in turn warms the atmosphere. This natural phenomenon is known as the "greenhouse effect." That said, excessive human-generated greenhouse gas (GHG)[15] emissions can and are altering the global climate.

The CEQA statutes, OPR guidelines, and the changes to the *State CEQA Guidelines* do not currently prescribe specific quantitative thresholds of significance or a particular methodology for conducting an impact analysis related to GHG effects on global climate. Rather, as with most environmental topics, significance criteria are left to the judgment and discretion of the Lead Agency, which, in this case, is the County of Riverside.

Currently, there is no statewide GHG emissions threshold that has been used to determine the potential GHG emissions impacts of a project. Threshold and threshold methodology are still being developed and revised by air quality districts in the State. Therefore, this environmental issue remains unsettled and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis until the SCAQMD adopts significance thresholds and a GHG emissions impact methodology.

Individual GHGs have varying global warming potentials and atmospheric lifetimes. Because it is not possible to tie specific GHG emissions to actual changes in climate, this evaluation focuses on the project's emission of GHGs. Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) is a consistent methodology for comparing GHG emissions because it normalizes various GHGs to the same metric. GHG emissions are typically measured in terms of metric tons of "CO_2 equivalents." Therefore, for the purpose of this technical analysis, the concept of CO_2e is used to describe how much GCC a given type and amount of GHG may cause, using the functionally equivalent amount or concentration of CO_2 as the reference.

[14] County of Riverside. 2015. Riverside County General Plan 2015. https://planning.rctlma.org/General-Plan-Zoning/General-Plan (accessed December 2020).

[15] The principal GHGs of concern contributing to the greenhouse effect are CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Water vapor is the largest naturally occurring GHG; however, it is not identified as an anthropogenic constituent of concern.

Findings of Fact

a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Construction GHG Emissions. GHG emissions associated with the project would occur over the short term from construction activities, consisting primarily of emissions from equipment and vehicle exhaust. The calculation presented below includes construction emissions in terms of annual CO_2e GHG emissions.

Construction activities produce combustion emissions from various sources such as grubbing/ land clearing, grading/excavation, drainage/sub-grading, paving, construction equipment hauling materials to and from the site, and motor vehicles transporting the construction crew. Changes were made to the Roadway Construction Emissions Model (RCEM) to include 6 trucks to haul soil away from the site and 12 trucks to import asphalt materials onto the site. Exhaust emissions from on-site construction activities would vary daily as construction activity levels change during the two months of construction. Table I presents the annual construction emissions based on the RCEM emission estimates. Results indicate that project implementation would generate approximately 525 metric tons (MT) of CO_2e. Per SCAQMD guidance, due to the long-term nature of GHGs in the atmosphere, instead of determining the significance of construction emissions alone, the total construction emissions are amortized over 30 years (an estimate of the life of the project) and included in the operations analysis. To amortize the emissions over the life of the project, the SCAQMD recommends calculating the total GHG emissions for the construction activities and dividing that total by a 30-year project life. Amortized over 30 years, the total construction emissions would generate approximately 17.5 MT of CO_2e per year. Screening thresholds have been published by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) for determining the need for additional analysis and mitigation for GHG-related impacts under CEQA.

Table I: Project Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Emissions	Pollutant Emissions			
	CO_2 T/yr	CH_4 T/yr	N_2O T/yr	CO_2e MT/yr
Total Project Emissions	570	0.15	0.15	525.0
Amortized Emissions	19.0	0.0	0.0	17.5

Source: Compiled by LSA (August 2018).

Note: Numbers in table may not appear to total correctly due to rounding of numbers.

CH_4 = methane
CO_2 = carbon dioxide
CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent
T/yr = tons per year
MT/yr = metric tons per year
N_2O = nitrous oxide

Operational GHG Emissions. The project involves minor road widening, bicycle lanes (striped) and roadway shoulders. Most of the GHG reduction required to achieve the State's AB 32 goals is from vehicle emissions that are outside the jurisdiction and control of the County, such as measures by the California Air Resources Board to improve vehicle emissions. GHG emission reductions for the automobile mode of travel will come from the State's regulations in terms of

cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled. The project is not adding additional lanes to the roadway and the vehicular traffic on the roadway would not exceed the capacity of the two-lane roadway. The project also includes bicycle lanes which provides the opportunity for alternative means of transportation that does not include the emissions of greenhouse gases. The project's impacts on long-term GHG emissions is less than significant and no mitigation is proposed.

b) Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact. The County of Riverside has recently developed a Climate Action Plan (CAP), which includes a countywide, long-range transportation plan to meet the County's future mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions. One of the main strategies in the CAP to reduce GHG emissions is to make the County's transportation system more efficient. The CAP defines performance-based goals, policies, and strategies to achieve the County's future land use development projects and multimodal transportation system. As indicated above, the project would generate negligible operational GHG emissions. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of AB 32, the County's CAP, the SCAQMD 2016 AQMP, or any other State or regional plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. No mitigation is proposed.

IX. Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visits, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

Regulatory Setting

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)Notification to the FAA is required for the construction of any tower or the alteration of an antenna structure that is registered with the Commission's Antenna Structure Registration (ASR) system. Generally, towers that meet certain height and location requirements (e.g., are more than 200 feet above ground level and/or are located within proximity of an airport) require notice with the FAA and ASR system and must register with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). A final determination of "no hazard" is required from the FAA prior to any construction or alteration of facilities.

California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)

CalEPA was formed in 1991 to preserve and protect the environment and to ensure public health and safety in relation to environmental laws and regulations. CalEPA manages the State's natural resources in a cohesive, cabinet-based system. Additionally, CalEPA implements the Unified Program, which ensures consistency in regard to the administrative and enforcement actions related to hazardous waste and materials.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

The RCRA of 1976 authorized USEPA to control hazardous waste from "cradle-to-grave," which includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. Additionally, RCRA established regulations for managing non-hazardous solid wastes. In 1986, amendments to RCRA provided authority to USEPA to manage environmental problems that could result from underground tanks storing petroleum and other hazardous substances.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)

Commonly known as Superfund, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 established regulations concerning closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites. Additionally, it provided regulations regarding liability for closed and abandoned hazardous waste sites and established a trust fund for cleanup when no liability is found.

California Department of Toxic Substances and Control (DTSC)

The DTSC is a sub-department under CalEPA and manages the federal hazardous waste program within the State. The DTSC regulates the lifecycle of hazardous waste and sets goals for reducing hazardous waste production. The program follows federal and State law to ensure hazardous waste managers correctly handle, store, transport, dispose of, reduce, and clean waste, and are equipped in the event of an emergency.

Government Code §65962.5 (Cortese List)

CalEPA is required by Section 65962.5 of the Government Code to develop and update a list of hazardous waste and substances sites, known as the Cortese List. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and DTSC identify hazardous substance release sites included on the Cortese List, which is used by State and local agencies to ensure CEQA compliance.

California Building Code

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design construction standards through Title 24 of the CCR through the CBC, which is located in Part 2 of Title 24. The CBC is updated every three years, and the current 2016 CBC went into effect in January 2017. It is generally adopted on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, subject to further modification based on local conditions. City building officials monitor commercial and residential building plans to ensure compliance with fire safety standards within the CBC.

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code includes regulations for emergency planning, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations and distribution. Several fire safety requirements include installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildlife hazard areas.

California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA)

CalEMA was consolidated as part of the Governor's Office on January 1, 2009, merging the former Governor's Office of Emergency Services with the existing Governor's Office of Homeland Security. CalEMA coordinates all State agency response to major disasters so to provide support and hazard mitigation efforts for local governments. The agency also ensures the State has the appropriate resources and plans in order to respond in the event of all natural and human-induced emergencies and disasters.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CAL FIRE maps the predicted threat of fire within all of California. CAL FIRE categorizes this threat based on factors including fuel availability, topography, fire history, and climate. These threats are ranked on a threshold from no fire threat, moderate, high, and very high fire threat. The 2012 Strategic Fire Plan for California was generated by CAL FIRE to provide guidelines and objectives in order to account for associated fire impacts.

California Accidental Release Prevention (CalARP) Program

The California Accidental Release Prevention Program (CalARP Program) aims to prevent accidental releases of regulated hazardous materials that represent a potential hazard beyond property boundaries. Facilities that are required to participate in the CalARP Program use or store specified quantities of toxic and flammable substances (hazardous materials) that can have off-site consequences if accidentally released. A Risk Management Plan (RMP) is required for such facilities. The intents of the RMP are to provide basic information that may be used by first responders in order to prevent or mitigate damage to the public health and safety and to the environment from a release or threatened release of a hazardous material, and to satisfy federal and State Community Right-to-Know laws.

Findings of Fact

a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less Than Significant Impact. Construction activities associated with the proposed project would use a limited amount of hazardous and flammable substances (e.g., fuels and oils) typical during heavy equipment operation for road construction. The amount of hazardous chemicals present during construction should be limited and would be in compliance with existing government regulations. The potential for the release of hazardous materials during project construction is low, and even if a release would occur, it would not result in a significant hazard to the public, surrounding land uses, or environment, due to the small quantities of these materials associated with road construction. Therefore, potential impacts from the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials during road construction of the project would be less than significant, and no mitigation is proposed.

The act of regulating the transport of hazardous materials on State highways is governed by the United States Department of Transportation, as described in Title 49 (Subtitle B, Chapter 1) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and by Title 13 (Chapter 2, Division 6) of the CCR. The

State Office of Hazardous Materials Safety enforces regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. It is likely that hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, or solvents will be transported to, stored and/or used during the period of construction. The volume of any such material transported to the project is limited to that required for road construction activities. Use of these substances is typical for construction activities and would be handled, stored, and disposed of in accordance with existing regulations and in accordance with the SWPPP and would not pose a significant hazard to the public or environment.

In addition, such materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations. Any associated risk would be adequately reduced to a less than significant level through compliance with these standards and regulations. Further, the Hazardous Materials Release Response Plan and Inventory Law of 1985 requires that businesses that use, handle, or store hazardous materials to prepare an inventory of hazardous substances on the premises. As stated previously, the plan would be required to include an inventory of hazardous materials, addressing the proper storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials; and dictating spill response and notification requirements. The project would be subject to compliance with this regulation, as well as additional applicable State and local regulations intended to manage the transport, storage, manufacture, and disposal of hazardous materials.

Upon completion of the proposed road construction, no ongoing or routine transport of hazardous materials to the site would be required. Again, during construction there is a limited risk of accidental release of hazardous material such as gasoline, oil, or other fluids used in the operation and maintenance of construction equipment. Any hazardous waste produced on site would be subject to requirements associated with accumulation time limits, proper storage locations and containers, and proper labeling.

Therefore, potential impacts from the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials resulting from operation of the project would be less than significant and no mitigation is proposed.

b) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. In the event that unknown hazardous materials are discovered on site during project construction, the construction contractor would be required to comply with a Site Management Plan (SMP), Removal Action Plan (RAP), or equivalent document developed and approved prior to the commencement of grading activities. Thus, the project would have proper measures in place and detailed actions that would be implemented if a release of hazardous materials takes place into the environment; therefore, impacts related to reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment would be reduced to less than significant with no mitigation proposed.

For Questions c, d, e, f, and g: **No Impact**

There is no existing or proposed school within a quarter-mile of the Thousand Palms Canyon Road Project. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, the Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List has been compiled by the California Environmental Protection Agency Hazardous Materials Data Management Program. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) compiles information from subsets of the following databases to make up the Cortese List.[16]

1) The DTSC list of contaminated or potentially contaminated hazardous waste sites listed in the California Sites database; and
2) The California State Water Resources Control Board listing of leaking underground storage tanks is included; and
3) The California Integrated Waste Management Board list of sanitary landfills that have evidence of groundwater contamination or known migration of hazardous materials (AB 3750).

The Cortese list shows no sites that would represent a significant hazard to the public or environment at the project location.

The closest airports to the project area are the Palm Springs International Airport and Bermuda Dunes Airport, which are respectively located approximately 9.7 miles west and 5.1 miles southeast of the project. The project area is not within the planning areas of the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Palm Springs International Airport and Bermuda Dunes Airport.[17] In addition, the proposed project is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip. Also, the proposed project is a transportation project and would not involve the introduction of residential or employment uses in the project. Due to the distance of these airports from the project site, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or generate excessive noise for people residing or working in the area.

The proposed project would be designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with applicable standards associated with vehicular access, resulting in the provision of adequate vehicular access that will provide for adequate emergency access and evacuation. The project will have a traffic management plan to direct traffic through the construction area, including emergency vehicles. The contractor will coordinate ahead of time with emergency responders and hospitals in the area. Activities that may temporarily restrict vehicular traffic would be required to implement adequate and appropriate measures to facilitate the passage of persons and vehicles through/around any required road closures.

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16 *Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese).* California Department of Toxic Substances Control. https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?cmd=search&reporttype=CORTESE&site_type=CSITES,OPEN,FUDS,CLOSE&status=ACT,BKLG,COM,COLUR&reporttitle=HAZARDOUS+WASTE+AND+SUBSTANCES+SITE+LIST+(CORTESE).

17 Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission. 2004. Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. October 14.

According to CAL FIRE Local Responsibility Area map for Western Riverside County, the project site is identified as being within a "Non-Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone." Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly expose people or structures to new increased wildland fire risks. No impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

X. Hydrology and Water Quality

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan; updated August 2017); Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Map Service; Riverside County General Plan

A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would detail the BMPs to be implemented during construction. Construction BMPs would include, but not be limited to, Erosion Control and Sediment Control BMPs designed to minimize the erosion and retain sediment on site, and Good Housekeeping BMPs to prevent spills, leaks, and discharge of construction debris and waste into receiving waters.

Regulatory Setting

Federal Clean Water Act

USEPA adopted the CWA in 1977 to set a framework for establishing regulations to protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) under Section 402(p) of the CWA aims to reduce the direct discharge of pollutants into waterways and manage additional pollution runoff. Section 303(d) of the CWA requires that each state identify "impaired" water bodies or segments of water bodies that do not meet at least one of the listed state water-quality standards. When the water body or segment is listed as impaired, the state institutes a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the pollutant found to be creating the impairment. The TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water-quality standards, and is usually calculated based on the total amount

of allowable loads generated by a single pollutant deriving from all of its originating point and non-point sources. The Section 303(d) list identifies water bodies that will need to establish a TMDL in the future in order to abide by water-quality standards. Pursuant to Section 303(d), the RWQCB has identified impaired water bodies within its authority as well as the associated pollutants causing the impairment.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

As described above, the NPDES was established under the CWA so to regulate municipal, industrial, and storm water discharges to the surface waters of the United States, including discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). All entities that discharge pollutants into an identified waterbody of the United States are required to obtain a NPDES permit.

National Flood Insurance Program

The National Flood Insurance Program exists under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) so to distinguish and evaluate flood hazards. FEMA generated Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) identify the location of these potential flooding hazards and help plan for the correct land use and floodplain development within those locations. Information for FIRMs is generated by Flood Insurance Studies. Special Flood Hazard Areas are distinguished via FIRMs. The current FIRM No. 06085C0263H (May 18, 2009) and FIRM No. 06085C0264H (May 18, 2009) show that the project site is located in Zone D, Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard, which is not considered a Special Flood Hazard Area.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

California adopted the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act in 1969, giving the SWRCB and RWQCBs the authority over State water rights and policies in relation to managing and enforcing water quality. The regional boards adopt Water Quality Control Plans (Basin Plans) that outline their region's water quality conditions and standards as well as beneficial uses of the region's ground and surface water.

Statewide Construction General Permit

Construction projects or activities that are one acre or more must obtain a General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, or a Construction General Permit from the SWRCB. Prior to construction, the Project Applicant must submit an online Permit Registration Document (PRD) to the Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System (SMARTS) website. The PRDs include a Notice of Intent (NOI), Risk Assessment, Post-Construction Calculations, a Site Map, the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), a signed certification by the Project Applicant, and the first annual fee. Applicants are also required develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) in accordance with the development of a SWPPP. The SWPPP maps the boundaries of the project site, identifying the existing and proposed structures and roads within the vicinity of the site, as well as storm water collection and discharge points and drainage patterns. These BMPs should address strategies to prevent soil erosion and the proper treatment and discharge of other pollutants generated by construction, which could contaminate waterways on or near the site. A SWPPP must also include a visual chemical monitoring program of nonvisible pollutants and a sediment-monitoring program.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

SGMA of 2014 is a comprehensive three-bill package that was signed into California state law by Governor Jerry Brown in September 2014. The SGMA that provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local authorities, with a limited role for State intervention only if necessary to protect the resource. The plan is intended to ensure a reliable groundwater water supply for California for years to come.

The SGMA requires the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) that must assess conditions in their local water basins and adopt locally based management plans. The SGMA requires that GSAs implement plans and achieve long-term groundwater sustainability within 20 years of implementation of the SGMA.

GSAs responsible for high- and medium-priority basins must adopt groundwater sustainability plans or an alternative to a groundwater sustainability plan within five to seven years of implementation of the SGMA, depending on whether the basin is in critical overdraft. Agencies may adopt a single plan covering an entire basin or combine a number of plans created by multiple agencies. Plans must include a physical description of the basin, including groundwater levels, groundwater quality, subsidence, information on groundwater-surface water interaction, data on historical and projected water demands and supplies, monitoring and management provisions, and a description of how the plan will affect other plans, including city and county general plans.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be developed for the project will address potential storm water runoff from construction. SWPPP guidelines provide best management practices (BMPs) and applicable ordinances for storm water management and drainage.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a and b: **No Impact**

The Colorado River RWQCB adopted the Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan; updated August 2017), which sets water quality standards for all ground and surface waters within the project's region.

Depths of groundwater near the project site are reported to be approximately 220 to 236 feet below the existing ground surface.[18] Two groundwater wells located near the project site were identified. The first well is approximately ½ mile to the west of the intersection on Thousand Palms Canyon Road and Dillion Road (State Well Number: 03S06E25Q001S, Site Code: 338762N1163082W001, in the Desert Hot Springs Groundwater Basin). This well has not been active since approximately mid-2019. The second well is approximately 1 mile from the intersection of Ramon Road and Thousand Palms Canyon Road (State Well Number: 04S06E22C001S, Site Code: 338165N1163457W001, in the Indio Groundwater Basin). Project construction activities would not include excavation extending to the groundwater table; depth for construction will normally be less than four feet. Therefore, construction activities do not

[18] Groundwater depth data were gathered from the nearest wells to the project site from the California Department of Water Resources Data website http://wdl.water.ca.gov/waterdatalibrary/.

have the potential to directly affect groundwater quality. However, pollutants in storm water are generally removed by soil through absorption as water infiltrates. In areas of deep groundwater, there is more absorption potential and, as a result, less potential for pollutants to reach groundwater. Due to the depth of the groundwater at the project site and standard construction procedures that follow the water quality control plan, there is not a direct path for pollutants to reach groundwater in the project area.

The proposed project is a roadway improvement project. Implementation of the project would not require the withdrawal of groundwater and, therefore, would not result in the direct lowering of the local groundwater table. Within the Coachella Valley, groundwater replenishment through direct precipitation is negligible due to the small amount of annual rainfall on the valley floor. The proposed project would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede substantial groundwater management of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin. Therefore, no impacts associated with this issue would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

c) Would the project 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?

Less Than Significant Impact. During the project construction activities, soil would be disturbed and drainage patterns could be temporarily altered. The project would not alter the course of a stream or river; however, it would increase impervious surface area on the project site through the addition of pavement or travel lanes and paving existing roadway shoulders which could increase runoff peak flow during a storm event.

Additionally, the project would be required to obtain the following permits:

- From the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board, Enrollment in State Board General Order 2004-0004-DWQ to regulate the discharge of fill to waters of the State under Porter-Cologne.
- From the State Water Resources Control Board, Notice of Intent to Comply with General Construction Activity National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit.
- From the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement for impacts to CDFW riparian streambed.

Once operational, the on-site impervious surface areas of the project would not be prone to erosion or siltation and, therefore, would not contribute to substantial on-site or off-site erosion or siltation. The project also requires the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in accordance with the associated development of a SWPPP. The SWPPP maps the boundaries of the project site, identifying the existing structures and roads within the vicinity of the site, as well as storm water collection and discharge points and drainage patterns. Compliance with standard regulatory measures results in a less than significant impact related to erosion and siltation.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on or off site?

Less Than Significant Impact. Project construction activities would temporarily alter the on-site drainage pattern, potentially compact on-site soils, and may temporarily increase the potential for flooding compared to existing conditions. The majority of Thousand Palms Canyon Road is on a slight slope to the south; however, proper management of storm water during the project construction period would reduce impacts associated with on-site or off-site flooding to less than significant. The SWPPP should discuss potential surface runoff that could cause flooding on or off site and mitigate potential runoff through the use of BMPs.

iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

No Impact. There are no storm drains within the project area. The project involves improvements to the existing road. Furthermore, the project would not provide additional sources of polluted runoff. A SWPPP will detail the BMPs to be implemented during construction. Construction BMPs would include, but not be limited to, Erosion Control and Sediment Control BMPs designed to minimize the erosion and retain sediment on site, and Good Housekeeping BMPs to prevent spills, leaks, and discharge of construction debris and waste into receiving waters. No impact and no mitigation is proposed.

For Questions d and e: **No Impact**

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Map Service, the project site is partially in a Zone AO Area of Minimal Flood Hazard. The project site is too far inland to be inundated by a tsunami. Additionally, the project site is not near any bodies of water and, therefore, would not be inundated by seiche. The project would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation. The project would comply with the Colorado River Basin Water Quality Control Plan and would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of said plan. No impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

XI. Land Use and Planning

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visit, Riverside County General Plan.

Regulatory Setting

There are no federal and/or State regulations related to land use and planning that are applicable to the proposed project.

Riverside County General Plan

The County's General Plan includes the following goals and policies related to land use that are applicable to the proposed Project:

- LU 1.5 The County of Riverside shall participate in regional efforts to address issues of mobility, transportation, traffic congestion, economic development, air and water quality, watershed and habitat management with cities, local and regional agencies, stakeholders, Indian nations, and surrounding jurisdictions. (AI 4, 16)

Findings of Fact

For Questions a and b: **No Impact.**

The proposed project is a roadway improvement project that would not physically divide an established community because it is an existing roadway that would be improved and widened in order to continue to serve the nearby communities. No acquisition of property is required to implement the roadway improvements. Overall, the roadway is surrounded by vacant land, with the exception of the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve and two former residences used by the Preserve as offices/storage. The proposed project is consistent with the County's General Plan Circulation Element and does not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project. There would be no impact.

XII. Mineral Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visit, Riverside County General Plan

Regulatory Setting

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1974

The California Department of Conservation, Geological Survey (CGS), and the California State Mining and Geology Board are required by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1974 (SMARA) to categorize lands into four Aggregate and Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs), described below. These MRZs classify lands that contain significant regional or statewide mineral deposits. Lead Agencies are mandated by the State to include MRZs into their General Plans.

Areas are classified on the basis of geologic factors without regard to existing land use and land ownership. The areas are categorized into four MRZs:

MRZ-1: An area where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.

MRZ-2: An area where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence.

MRZ-3: An area containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated.

MRZ-4: An area where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone.

Of the four categories, lands classified as MRZ-2 are of the greatest importance because such areas are underlain by demonstrated mineral resources or are located where geologic data indicate that significant measured or indicated resources are present. MRZ-2 areas are designated by the State Mining and Geology Board as being "regionally significant." Such designations require that a Lead Agency make land use decisions involving designated areas in accordance with its mineral resource management policies and that it consider the importance of the mineral resource to the region or the State as a whole, not just to the Lead Agency's jurisdiction.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a and b: **No Impact.**

The proposed project is a roadway improvement project and would continue to operate as it currently does in its existing condition. According to the Riverside County General Plan, the project site is not designated as an area with known significant mineral resource value. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of high value to the region and the residents of the State, nor would it result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. Therefore, no impacts would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

XIII. Noise

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:				
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Road Construction Emissions Model (version 9.0.0), FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook, (2006), County of Riverside Code, Section 9.52.020, Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual, Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

Regulatory Setting

There are no federal and/or State regulations related to noise that are applicable to the proposed project.

Findings of Fact

Noise-sensitive receptors include residences, schools, hospitals, and similar uses. Sensitivity to noise increases during the evening and at night. There are no noise-sensitive land uses near the project because areas adjacent to the project is vacant land, except for the two former residences which are owned by the Preserve and used for offices/storage. Non-noise-sensitive land uses in the project area include one property for office uses associated with the Coachella Valley Preserve. The existing noise environment in the project area is influenced by traffic noise on Thousand Palms Canyon Road.

For noise and vibration, there are no operational BMPs or standard measures for this project because there are no operational noise and vibration impacts. Paving of Thousand Palms Canyon Road, vehicular traffic related to construction, and project construction activities are considered short-term temporary impacts and not long-term operations of Thousand Palms Canyon Road. Although temporary construction noise impacts are considered less than significant, this section provides standard measures to further minimize construction noise.

a) Would the project result in 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?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Temporary Impacts. Section 9.52.020(b) of the County Code exempts noise from capital improvement project of a governmental agency. In addition, Section 9.52.020(h) in the County Code exempts private construction projects located one-quarter of a mile or more from an inhabited dwelling. Also, Section 9.52.020(i) in the County Code limits private construction project located within one-quarter mile from an inhabited dwelling provided that construction does not occur between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. during the months of June through September and between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. during the months of October through May.

Two types of short-term noise impacts could occur during construction of the proposed project. First, construction crew commutes and the transport of construction equipment and materials to the site for the proposed project would incrementally increase noise levels on access roads leading to the site. Although there would be a relatively high single event noise exposure potential causing intermittent noise nuisance, passing trucks at 50 feet would generate up to a maximum of 84 A-weighted decibels (dBA) shown in Table J. Based on the Road Construction Emissions Model (version 9.0.0) in the air quality analysis, the grading/excavation phase would generate the most trips out of all of the construction phases, at 66 vehicles per hour or 150 vehicles per day. Thousand Palms Canyon Road would be used to access the project site. The existing hourly/daily traffic volumes on Thousand Palms Canyon Road is estimated to be 400/4,000. Construction-related traffic would increase traffic noise levels by up to 0.7 dBA on Thousand Palms Canyon Road. A noise level increase of less than 3 dBA would not be perceptible to the human ear in an outdoor environment. Therefore, short-term construction-related impacts associated with worker commute and equipment transport to the project site would be less than significant.

Table J: Typical Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment Description	Acoustical Usage Factor[1]	Maximum Noise Level (L_{max}) at 50 feet[2]
Backhoe	40	80
Compactor (ground)	20	80
Compressor	40	80
Crane	16	85
Dozer	40	85
Dump Truck	40	84
Excavator	40	85
Flatbed Truck	40	84
Forklift	20	85
Front-End Loader	40	80
Grader	40	85
Impact Pile Driver	20	95

Table J: Typical Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment Description	Acoustical Usage Factor[1]	Maximum Noise Level (L_{max}) at 50 feet[2]
Jackhammer	20	85
Pickup Truck	40	55
Pneumatic Tools	50	85
Pump	50	77
Rock Drill	20	85
Roller	20	85
Scraper	40	85
Tractor	40	84
Welder	40	73

Source: *FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook,* Table 9.1 (FHWA 2006).

Note: The noise levels reported in this table are rounded to the nearest whole number.

[1] Usage factor is the percentage of time during a construction noise operation that a piece of construction equipment is operating at full power.

[2] Maximum noise levels were developed based on Spec 721.560 from the CA/T program to be consistent with the City of Boston, Massachusetts, Noise Code for the "Big Dig" project.

CA/T = Central Artery/Tunnel
L_{max} = maximum instantaneous noise level
FHWA = United States Federal Highway Administration

The second type of short-term noise impact is related to noise generated during grubbing/land clearing, grading/excavation, drainage/utilities, and paving on site. Construction performed in various sequential phases would change the character of the noise generated on site. Therefore, the noise levels vary as construction progresses. Despite the variety in the type and size of construction equipment, similarities in the dominant noise sources and patterns of operation allow construction-related noise ranges to be categorized by work phase. Table J lists the maximum noise levels (L_{max}) recommended for noise impact assessments for typical construction equipment included in the *FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook,*[19] based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and a noise receptor.

Typical maximum noise levels range up to 88 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet during the noisiest construction phases. The grading and excavation of the project site, tends to generate the highest noise levels because the noisiest construction equipment is the earthmoving equipment. Earthmoving equipment includes excavating machinery such as backfillers, bulldozers, draglines, and front-end loaders. Earthmoving and compacting equipment includes compactors, scrapers, and graders.

Project construction is expected to require the use of scrapers, excavators, and water trucks/ pickup trucks on the project site. Based on the information in Table J, the maximum noise level generated by each scraper is assumed to be 85 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet from the scraper. Each excavator would also generate 85 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. The maximum noise level generated by water trucks/pickup trucks is approximately 55 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet from these vehicles. Each doubling of the sound sources with equal strength increases the noise level by 3 dBA. Assuming

[19] United States Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2006. *FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook*. Roadway Construction Noise Model, FHWA HEP-06-015. DOT-VNTSC-FHWA-06-02. NTIS No. PB2006-109012. August.

that each piece of construction equipment operates at some distance from the other equipment, the worst-case combined noise level during this phase of construction would be 88 dBA L_{max} at a distance of 50 feet from the active construction area.

Land uses adjacent to the project construction area are primarily vacant land except for two properties used for offices/storage for the Coachella Valley Preserve approximately 80 feet from the project construction area. These properties may be subject to short-term noise reaching 88 dBA L_{max}. Although the noise generated by project construction activities would be higher than the ambient noise levels and would result in a temporary increase in the ambient noise levels, construction noise would stop once project construction is completed. Noise generated by project construction activities is exempt based on Section 9.52.020(b) of the County Code because proposed project is a capital improvement project of a governmental agency. Although noise generated by project construction activities are exempt, construction activities should be limited to the hours specified in Section 9.52.020(i) in the County Code. The implementation of construction hour limits and standard conditions for construction listed below would minimize construction noise. Therefore, noise generated from project construction activities would be less than significant. No mitigation measures are proposed.

- The construction contractor shall limit construction activities to between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. during the months of June through September and 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. during the months of October through May. No construction activities shall be permitted outside these hours.
- During all project site excavation and grading, the project contractors shall equip all construction equipment, fixed or mobile, with properly operating and maintained mufflers consistent with manufacturers' standards.
- The construction contractor shall locate equipment staging in areas that will create the greatest distance between construction-related noise sources and most noise-sensitive receptors nearest the project site during all project construction.
- The construction contractor shall place all stationary construction equipment so that the emitted noise is directed away from the sensitive receptors nearest the project site.

Operational Impacts. The existing Thousand Palms Canyon Road pavement width is approximately 22 feet with 11-foot through lanes and a 1-foot paved shoulder. Also, there is a half-mile segment of Thousand Palms Canyon Road adjacent to the Coachella Valley Nature Preserve that is 32 feet wide with 12-foot through lanes and 4-foot paved shoulders. The proposed improvements would increase the width of Thousand Palms Canyon Road to 34 feet with 12-foot through lanes and 5-foot paved shoulders. Although the width of Thousand Palms Canyon Road would increase by up to 12 feet, vehicle travel lanes would only be shifted by up to 1 foot closer to adjacent land uses. Therefore, project-related traffic noise increase would be minimal (less than 3 dBA) to negligible. A noise level increase of less than 3 dBA would not be perceptible to the human ear in an outdoor environment. Therefore, traffic noise impacts on off-site land uses would be considered less than significant and no mitigation measures are proposed.

b) Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Temporary Impacts. Vibration generated by construction equipment can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment. The operation of construction equipment causes ground vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in strength with distance. Buildings on soil near an active construction area respond to these vibrations, which range from imperceptible to low rumbling sounds with perceptible vibrations and slight damage at the highest vibration levels. Typically, construction-related vibration does not reach vibration levels that would result in damage to nearby structures.

The *Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual*[20] shows that the vibration damage threshold for continuous/frequent intermittent sources is 0.25 peak-particle velocity (PPV) (inches per second [in/sec]) for historic and old buildings. The *Manual* shows the vibration annoyance potential criteria to be barely perceptible at 0.01 PPV (in/sec), distinctly perceptible at 0.04 PPV (in/sec), and strongly perceptible at 0.10 PPV (in/sec) for continuous/ frequent intermittent sources. These thresholds were used to evaluate the potential for short-term construction-related groundborne vibration during construction of the proposed project.

Bulldozers and loaded trucks used for construction of the proposed project would generate the highest groundborne vibration levels. Based on the *Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual,* a large bulldozer and loaded trucks would generate vibration levels of 0.089 PPV (in/sec) and 0.076 PPV (in/sec), respectively, when measured at 25 feet. Based on the worst-case condition, the closest structure from the project construction boundary is approximately 80 feet. At this distance, the closest structure would experience a vibration level of up to 0.016 PPV (in/sec). This vibration level would be the barely perceptible and would not exceed the damage threshold of 0.25 PPV (in/sec) for historic and old buildings. Therefore, short-term construction impacts related to groundborne vibration would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are proposed.

Operational Impacts. Once operational, the proposed project would not generate any additional traffic, and regional traffic trips are expected to remain the same. Roads are not typically major sources of groundborne noise or vibration. Groundborne vibration is mostly associated with passenger vehicles and trucks traveling on roads with poor conditions (e.g., potholes, bumps, expansion joints, or other discontinuities in the road surface). Although the project would install rumble strips that would generate groundborne vibration when vehicles travel over them, passenger vehicles and trucks would not travel over rumble strips under normal conditions. Vibration effects of passenger vehicles and trucks (e.g., rattling of windows) are almost always a result of airborne noise. The proposed project would include new asphalt pavement with proper maintenance. As a result, there would be no potholes, bumps, or other discontinuities in the road surface that would generate groundborne vibration or noise impacts

[20] California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2013. *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual*. September. Website: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tcvgm-apr2020-a11y.pdf (accessed April 2020).

from vehicular traffic traveling on Thousand Palms Canyon Road. Therefore, groundborne vibration and noise impacts generated by vehicles traveling through the project corridor would be less than significant and no mitigation measures are proposed.

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 2 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?

No Impact. The closest airports to the project area are the Palm Springs International Airport and Bermuda Dunes Airport, which are respectively located approximately 9.7 miles west and 5.1 miles southeast of the project. The project area is not within the planning areas of the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Palm Springs International Airport and Bermuda Dunes Airport.[21] In addition, the proposed project is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip. Also, the proposed project is a transportation project and would not involve the introduction of residential or employment uses in the project area. Therefore, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project vicinity to aviation-related excessive noise levels and no impacts would occur.

[21] Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission. 2004. Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. October 14.

XIV. Population and Housing

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visit

Regulatory Setting

There are no federal and/or State regulations related to population and housing that are applicable to the proposed project.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a and b: **No Impact**

Implementation of the proposed road improvement project would result in the improvement and widening of Thousand Palms Canyon Road. The purpose of the proposed project is to comprehensively improve the function of the existing corridor. Unlike the development of a residential, commercial, or industrial use, the project would not induce growth.

The construction of the proposed project would create short-term construction jobs; however, these short-term positions are anticipated to be filled by workers who, for the most part, already reside in the Coachella Valley area. Construction of the proposed project would not generate a permanent increase in population within the project area. Infrastructure, including roads and electricity, already exists around the project site. Because the proposed project would improve an existing roadway, it would not induce indirect growth above that which is planned for or that currently exists.

Furthermore, the proposed project would increase an existing roadway by 12 feet in width. The improvement project is adjacent to existing vacant land and the Coachella Valley Preserve and does not require the acquisition of additional right of way. Therefore, displacement of housing and residents would not occur and no mitigation is proposed.

XV. Public Services

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. 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:				
i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
v. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field visit; County of Riverside General Plan Circulation Element

Regulatory Setting

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code exists within Part 9 of the California Building Code, and includes measures for emergency planning preparation and safety. Examples of fire safety requirements include installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildlife hazard areas.

California Government Code Sections 65995 to 65998 (School Facilities)

California Government Code Section 65996 exists to offset a project's impact on school facilities by paying a fee to the associated school district prior to receiving a building permit. The school district is therefore responsible for implementing specific methods for mitigating school impacts under the Government Code. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65995, payment of school impact fees is considered to be full mitigation for reducing impacts on school facilities that would result from implementation of a project.

Findings of Fact

For Questions i, ii, and iv: Fire Protection, Police Protection, and Parks: **Less Than Significant Impact**

The proposed project is a roadway improvement project and does not include the construction of structures or features or changes in operation that would increase demand on fire or police protection services for the project site or area. This project would not increase capacity; it would be constructed with the same number of traffic lanes as the existing roadway but with lanes to accommodate current roadway standards and improve circulation. The project does not include

occupied buildings, nor does it include any residential, commercial, or other uses. The project will not increase demand for fire/police/sheriff services or cause fire/police/sheriff staffing, facilities, or equipment to operate at a deficient level of service since no direct increase in population would occur. However, traffic delays may occur that could intermittently affect general access to the Preserve (a park) and fire/police response along the project alignment during construction. A Traffic Management Plan (TRA-1) to address traffic detours during construction will be prepared, reviewed, and approved by the Riverside County Transportation Department as standard compliance, as is the case with all County road construction projects, including coordination by the contractor with emergency response teams. Because of this standard practice, project impacts on the Preserve and to fire and police would be less than significant.

For Questions iii and iv: Schools and Other Public Facilities: **No Impact.**

The proposed project will not include building residential units that would house school-aged children. Since there is no increase in school-aged or general population associated with the proposed project, no new demand on existing schools would occur. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase the demand for school services and no new school facilities would be required. No impacts would occur with respect to school services and no mitigation is proposed. This project does not include a residential component that would result in an increase in population that would use public facilities such as libraries or hospital services. Since there is no increase in population associated with the proposed project, no new demand on public facilities would occur. In the absence of any direct or indirect population increase, no impact would occur. Since there is no increase in population associated with the proposed project, no new demand on public facilities such as libraries and hospital services would occur.

XVI. Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): Field Visit

Regulatory Setting

There are no federal or State regulations related to recreational resources that are applicable to the proposed project.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a and b: **No Impact**

The proposed project is a roadway improvement project and does not include a residential, commercial or office/business component that would result in an increase in population. Since there is no increase in population associated with the proposed project, no new demand on existing park or recreational facilities would occur. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated. No impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

XVII. Transportation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Source(s): County of Riverside General Plan Circulation Element; Western Coachella Valley Area Plan

Regulatory Setting

Senate Bill 743

On September 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 743 into law and started a process that changes the methodology of a transportation impact analysis as part of CEQA requirements. SB 743 directed the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to establish new CEQA guidance for jurisdictions that removes the Level of Service (LOS) method, which focuses on automobile vehicle delay and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion, from CEQA transportation analysis. Rather, Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), or other measures that promote "the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses," are now be used as the basis for determining significant transportation impacts in the State.

State CEQA Guidelines *Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b)*

In January 2018, the OPR submitted a proposal for comprehensive updates to the *State CEQA Guidelines* to the California Natural Resources Agency. The submittal included proposed updates related to the analysis of GHG emissions and energy and transportation impacts pursuant to SB 743, and wildfires, as well as revisions to Section 15126.2(a) in response to the California Supreme Court's decision in *California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (2015) 62 Cal. 4th 369. On December 28, 2018, the updated *State CEQA Guidelines* went into effect.

As part of the update to the *State CEQA Guidelines*, Section 15064.3 was added and codifies that project-related transportation impacts are typically best measured by evaluating the project's VMT. Specifically, subdivision (b) focuses on specific criteria related to transportation analysis and is divided into four subdivisions: (1) land use projects, (2) transportation projects, (3), qualitative analysis, and (4) methodology. Subdivision (b)(1) provides guidance on determining the significance of transportation impacts of land use projects using VMT; projects located within 0.5 mile of transit

should be considered to have a less than significant impact. Subdivision (b)(2) addresses VMT associated with transportation projects and states that projects that reduce VMT, such as pedestrian, bicycle, and transit projects, should be presumed to have a less than significant impact. Subdivision (b)(3) acknowledges that Lead Agencies may not be able to quantitatively estimate VMT for every project type; in these cases, a qualitative analysis may be used. Subdivision (b)(4) stipulates that Lead Agencies have the discretion to formulate a methodology that would appropriately analyze a project's VMT.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a, b and c: **No Impact**

The proposed project is a roadway improvement project and does not include trip-generating uses (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). The proposed project would not conflict with any of the policies identified by the County of Riverside General Plan or the Western Coachella Valley Area Plan. The proposed bike lanes, which are a component of the project, are consistent with the designation of the route as regionally significant for this transportation mode per the Coachella Valley Association of Governments Active Transportation Plan (2017).[22] The proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation.

The project would not result in additional vehicle miles traveled above and beyond what is already considered in the County of Riverside General Plan because the project does not increase vehicle capacity. The proposed project is consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3(b). The proposed project includes pavement widening and the addition of bicycle lanes to an existing roadway that does not include new geometric design features or incompatible uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not create an increase in hazards due to a geometric design feature but would improve the roadway for use by drivers and cyclists. No impacts would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project would be required to be designed, constructed, and maintained to provide for adequate emergency access and evacuation.. Construction activities, which may temporarily restrict vehicular traffic, would be required to implement adequate and appropriate measures to facilitate the passage of persons and vehicles through/around any required road closures. However, these temporary impacts would be substantially minimized through the implementation of a Traffic Management Plan as identified in **Avoidance Measure TRA-1**. Adherence to **Avoidance Measure TRA-1** would reduce potential impacts related to this issue to a less than significant level.

Avoidance Measure for Transportation:

TRA-1: A detailed Traffic Management Plan (TMP) shall be prepared during the construction bid phase of the project and approved by the Riverside County

[22] Coachella Valley Association of Governments Active Transportation Plan. 2017. https://www.cvag.org/library/pdf_files/trans/Transportation_Documents/CVAG%20ATP%202016-06-20%20rev2017-06-07.pdf.

Transportation Department. The objective of the TMP is to minimize the potential impacts that construction activities may have on the safety of traveling public, construction personnel, and emergency services providers.

XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a. 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:				
i. 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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. 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.	☐	☒	☐	☐

Source(s): California Register of Historic Places, California Assembly Bill (AB) 52 (2015), Cultural Resource Assessment for the Riverside County Transportation Department's Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening and Resurfacing Project (2020)

Regulatory Setting

Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)

In 1976, the California State Government passed AB 4239, creating the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC is responsible for identifying and categorizing Native American cultural resources as well as preventing damages to designated sacred sites and associated artifacts and remains. Legislation passed in 1982 authorized the NAHC to identify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) when Native American remains are found outside of any place other than a designated cemetery. An MLD has the authority to make recommendations in regards to the treatment and disposition of the discovered remains.

The Native American Historic Resource Protection Act

The Native American Historic Resource Protection Act, or Assembly Bill (AB 52), defines guidelines for reducing conflicts between Native Americans and development projects and activities. Projects are subject to AB 52 if a notice of preparation for an EIR is filed or a notice of intent to adopt a Negative or Mitigated Negative Declaration is filed on or after July 1, 2016. "Tribal cultural resources" (TCR) are protected under CEQA and are defined as a site, feature, place, cultural landscape (must include the size and scope of landscape), sacred place, and object with a cultural value to a California Native American tribe that is either included or eligible for inclusion in the

California Register, or included in a local register of historical resources. At the lead agency's discretion, a resource can be treated as a TCR if a Native American Tribe provides substantial evidence. Additionally, AB 52 allows tribes to engage in consultation with lead agencies and sets guidelines for such consultation.

Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5

Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code protects Native American burials, remains, and associated grave artifacts in the event that they are discovered in any location other than a designated cemetery. The Code mandates the immediate stop of excavation in the site as well as any adjacent or overlying area where the remains or associated item is found, and provides for the sensitive disposition of those remains. Should remains be discovered, the County Coroner must determine that the remains are not subject to the provisions of Section 27491 of the Government Code or any other related provisions of law concerning investigation of the circumstances, manner and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or designee, in the manner provided in Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code. The County Coroner shall make the determination within two working days from the time the person responsible for the excavation, or designee, notifies the County Coroner of the discovery or recognition of the human remains. If the County Coroner identifies the remains to be of Native American origin, or has reason to believe that the remains are those of Native American origin, the County Coroner must contact the California NAHC within 24 hours. The NAHC representative will then alert a Native American MLD to conduct an inspection of the site and to determine the following course of treatment and action. Additionally, *State CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5 sets forth a procedure if human remains are found on land outside of federal jurisdiction.

Findings of Fact

a) 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:

i) 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)?

No Impact. There are no sites listed or deemed to be eligible for listing in the CRHR[23] or listed in a local register of historical resources where the Thousand Palms Canyon Road Project is located. The proposed project does not meet any of the CRHR criteria and the project site does not qualify as a "historical resource" as defined by CEQA. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 of the *State CEQA Guidelines.*

ii) 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

[23] California Office of Historic Preservation, Riverside County (https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21452), April 2020.

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.

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. California Assembly Bill (AB) 52 was enacted on July 1, 2015. AB 52 added a new requirement for Native American consultation under CEQA and recognized a new cultural resource type, the tribal cultural resource.

Applied EarthWorks, Inc. contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) for a review of its Sacred Lands File (SLF), to determine if any known Native American cultural properties (e.g., traditional use or gathering areas, places of religious or sacred activity) are present within or adjacent to the project area. The NAHC responded on November 5, 2019, stating the SLF search was completed with negative results. The NAHC provided a list of Native American individuals and organizations to be contacted to elicit information and/or concerns regarding cultural resource issues related to the proposed project, if any. Results of the NAHC SLF search and Native American contact list were turned over to the RCTD to assist with its government-to-government consultation requirements under AB 52.

On January 15, 2020, RCTD mailed the initial AB 52 notification letters to nine Native American tribes with interests in the project area. Copies of the letters, the list of contacts, and received responses are included in the *Cultural Resource Assessment for the Riverside County Transportation Department's Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening and Resurfacing Project*. Four tribal representatives provided responses as logged in the Cultural Resource Assessment (2020). Summaries of responses received are:

- As a result of the AB 52 notification, the Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians responded on February 11, 2020, and requested formal consultation with RCTD, copies of any cultural resource documentation (report and site records) generated in connection with the project, and the presence of an approved Cultural Resource Monitor during any ground-disturbing activities.
- The Cabazon Band of Mission Indians responded on January 28, 2020, and stated the project area is located outside of the Tribe's current reservation boundaries and the Tribe has no specific information about the project area.
- The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians responded on January 23, 2020, and stated the project area is located outside of the Tribe's current reservation boundaries, as such, the Tribe will not be requesting consulting party status with the lead agency or requesting to participate in the scoping, development, and/or review of documents created pursuant to legal and regulatory mandates.
- The Morongo Band of Mission Indians deferred to the Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians per correspondence on February 11, 2020, and prior telephone conversations.

As a result of the consultation Mitigation Measures TCR-1 through TCR-3 were agreed upon by the County and the Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians to reduce any potential impacts to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

TCR-1: Tribal Monitoring: At least 30 days prior to the commencement of ground-disturbing activity, a Riverside County consultant shall provide a Native American Monitoring Agreement with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

TCR-2: Treatment and Final Disposition of Cultural Resources: Any archaeological resource unearthed during construction activities shall be evaluated by the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American Monitor(s). If the resource is determined to be Native American in origin, any such resource (including sacred items, burial goods, and all archaeological artifacts and non-human remains) shall be addressed through one or more of the following methods:

- Preservation in place by accommodating on-site reburial of the discovered items with the consulting Native American tribe(s). This shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from any future impacts. Reburial shall not occur until all cataloging and recordation efforts have been completed.
- A curation agreement with an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR Part 79. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility within Riverside County, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation.
- If more than one Native American Tribe or band is involved with the project, consensus needs to be reached amongst all Tribes involved regarding the repository. If consensus cannot be reached, the County of Riverside will select an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR 79.

TCR-3: Discovery of Human Remains: In the event that human remains (or remains that may be human) are discovered within the construction areas, all activity within 60 feet of the find shall be immediately halted. Any discovery of human remains shall be immediately reported by the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American monitor(s) to the County Coroner. If the human remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), who shall appoint a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) in accordance with California Public Resources Code 5097.98.

The discovery of any Native American human remains and/or funerary objects shall be kept confidential and secure to prevent any further disturbance. In the case where discovered human remains cannot be fully documented and recovered on the same day, the remains and associated funerary objects, sacred objects and/or objects of cultural patrimony shall be covered with an opaque material or placed in opaque cloth bags. A physical barrier (e.g., metal plate, concrete slab that can be moved by heavy equipment) shall be placed over the excavation opening to protect the remains until examination by the MLD can occur. If this type of protective barrier is not available, a 24-hour guard shall be posted outside of working hours.

The MLD shall complete his or her inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD shall identify and direct the most appropriate means of treating the human remains and any associated funerary object(s). As determined through consultation with the County, the MLD shall make recommendations that allow the burial to remain in situ and protected.

Once complete, a final report of all activities associated with or resulting from the discovery of human remains shall be submitted to the NAHC.

XIX. Utilities and Service Systems

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Comply with federal, State, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991

Regulatory Setting

California Urban Water Management Planning Act

Under the California Water Code and Urban Water Management Planning Act of 1983, all California urban water suppliers are required to prepare and adopt an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) every five years, which promotes water conservation and efficiency measures. Urban water suppliers that serve more than 3,000 customers or are supplying more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually are subject to this Act. This Act requires that the total project water use be compared to water supply sources over the next 20 years in five-year increments. Planning must occur for all drought years and must include a water recycling analysis that incorporates a description of the wastewater collection and treatment system, outlining existing and potential recycled water uses. In September 2014, the Act was amended by SB 1420, which now requires urban water suppliers to provide descriptions of their water demand management measures and similar information.

State Updated Model Landscape Ordinance

The State Updated Model Landscape Ordinance requires the adoption of landscape water conservation ordinances or the adoption of a different ordinance that is at least as stringent as the updated Model Ordinance. The City adopted Water Efficient Landscaping Standards for new and Rehabilitated Landscaping in 2013, as well as the revised SJMC Chapter 15.11.

Water Conservation Act of 2009

The Water Conservation Act of 2009 (SB X7-7) requires all water suppliers to increase water use efficiency by reducing per capita urban water use by 20 percent by December 31, 2020. This bill also set a goal for the State of reducing per capita water use by at least 10 percent by December 31, 2015.

California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939)

AB 939 established the California Integrated Waste Management Board under CalRecycle, which required all counties within California to prepare integrated waste management plans. Additionally, it changed the focus of solid waste management from landfill to diversion strategies (e.g., source reduction, recycling, and composting), and required all municipalities to divert 25 percent of their solid waste from landfill disposal by January 1, 1995, and 50 percent by 2000.

Findings of Fact

For Questions a, b, c, d, and e: **No Impact**

The nearest utilities to the project site are electrical power lines located on the west side of the road, outside of the area where road improvements would occur. The project does not include relocation or disruption of public or private utilities. Moreover, the project does not include uses that require expanded water, wastewater, drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. There are no utilities within the roadway right of way that would be impacted by the pavement widening. Although there are no utilities identified that would be impacted, the construction contractor for the project shall notify utility service providers in the unlikely event of disruption or damage of unidentified services through standard construction procedures.

On-site water usage would be generally limited to the application of water on ground disturbance areas to control dust during construction. This roadway improvement project would continue to operate as it currently does in its existing condition. The proposed project does not include the development of uses that require additional potable or treated water, or connection to existing potable/treated water systems. No new demand on existing water or wastewater facilities would occur; therefore, the project would not require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater facilities or the expansion of existing facilities.

This roadway improvement project does not include a residential, industrial, or commercial component. Since the proposed project does not include the construction or operation of any structure or facility that would permanently increase the generation of wastewater, no new or expanded wastewater facilities or services would be required. Similarly, the proposed project would generate minimal solid waste, if any, during construction and no solid waste would be generated during operation of the roadway. There is adequate capacity at multiple landfills to accommodate any construction waste generated by the proposed project. The proposed project would be required to comply with all federal, State, and local regulations related to solid waste. Furthermore, the proposed project would comply with all standards related to solid waste diversion, reduction, and recycling during project construction, including applicable elements of AB 1327, Chapter 18 (California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Access Act of 1991). Adherence

to these solid waste requirements and standards would ensure no impact to statutes and regulations and as described above there would be no impact to other utilities and service systems.

XX. Wildfire

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:				
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Source(s): California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

Regulatory Setting

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CAL FIRE publishes maps that predict the threat of fire for each county within the State. Local Responsibility Areas and State or Federal Responsibility Areas are classified as either very high fire hazard severity zones (VHFHSZ) or non-VHFHSZ based on factors including fuel availability, topography, fire history, and climate. The 2012 Strategic Fire Plan for California was generated by CAL FIRE to provide guidelines and objectives in order to account for associated fire impacts.

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code includes regulations for emergency planning, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations and distribution. Several fire safety requirements include installation of sprinklers in all high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the clearance of debris and vegetation within a prescribed distance from occupied structures in wildlife hazard areas.

California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA)

CalEMA was consolidated as part of the Governor's Office on January 1, 2009, merging the former Governor's Office of Emergency Services with the existing Governor's Office of Homeland Security. CalEMA coordinates all State agency response to major disasters to provide support and hazard mitigation efforts for local governments. The agency also ensures the State has the appropriate resources and plans in order to respond in the event of all natural and human-induced emergencies and disasters.

Executive Order N-05-19

On January 9, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom announced an Executive Order (EO) that requires CAL FIRE and other State agencies to compile policy and regulatory recommendations concerning wildfire mitigation, emphasizing environmental sustainability and public health. The EO requires the incorporation of socioeconomic analysis when conducting risk management of wildfires and mandates that agencies identify geographic areas with populations that are more vulnerable to the impacts of wildfires.

Western Coachella Valley Area Plan

The area plan contains information consistent with CAL FIRE and has the following policy, which, in turn, per the General Plan Safety Element, calls for implementation of a coordination program with fire protection and emergency service providers to reassess fire hazards after wildfire events and to adjust fire prevention and suppression needs, as necessary.[24]

- WCVAP 25.1 Protect life and property from wildfire hazards through adherence to the Fire Hazards section of the General Plan Safety Element.[25]

Findings of Fact

According to CAL FIRE, the project area has three different areas designated as fire hazard areas. The southern portion of the project site is within a Federal Responsibility Area (FRA).[26] The middle portion of the project site, mostly around the Coachella Valley Preserve, is within a Local Responsibility Area (LRA)[27] Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). The northern portion of the project site is within an FRA, but also within a VHFHSZ in the area nearest to Dillion Road.

For Questions a, b, c, and d: **No Impact**

During project construction, no complete road closures are anticipated and the majority of construction activities will occur with the road open to through traffic. Short-term lane closures could occur affecting local traffic; however, none would substantially impair adopted emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans in the area and no impact would occur.

The project site is on an existing road with no nearby residences; therefore, no local population would be subject to wildfire-related pollutant concentrations. The Coachella Valley Preserve, and two buildings just to the north of the Preserve center, are the only structures in the vicinity. The project site and surrounding areas are on flat to slightly sloping terrain with the surrounding area exemplified by typical desert landscape (i.e., rocks, desert soil, sparse vegetation, and palm tree oases within the Coachella Valley Preserve approximately 300 feet from the project alignment). While the middle project area is identified as a VHFHSZ, implementation of the project, in itself, would not expose construction workers or the preserve visitors to additional wildfire risk or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Spark arresters are standard on

24 https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/elements/Ch06_Safety_080619.pdf, accessed March 29, 2021.
25 https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/2019/ap/WCVAP_121019.pdf, accessed March 29, 2021.
26 Federal Responsibility Area (FRA) are areas for which the Federal Agencies are responsible for wildland fire protection under various federal laws.
27 "Local Responsibility Areas" (LRA) are lands for which a local government agency is responsible for all fire protection.

contemporary construction equipment, which would avoid and minimize the risk of accidental construction-induced wildfire. Furthermore, given the project's proximity to urbanized areas, there are multiple fire stations within response distance, the closest of which is on Robert Road, less than 15 minutes from the farthest extreme of the project area.

The area surrounding the project site is not occupied by any residential units, commercial uses, other roadways, or utilities other than electric lines to the west of the project site. Implementation of the proposed project would not include new infrastructure or the relocation of existing infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk.

The project site is slightly sloped starting at Dillion Road all the way down to Ramon Road. Storm water would continue to flow downslope and the improved roadway would not change any of the existing patterns of runoff. The proposed project would not alter slopes or drainage patterns in a manner that would expose people or structures to significant risks. No impact would occur and no mitigation is proposed.

XXI. Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant 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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
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.)	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Findings of Fact

a) Does the project have the potential to 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, 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?

Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated. The project, through design and best management practices along with compliance with the CVMSHCP, would have a less than significant impact on the environment. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey would be required in the Conservation Areas, using an accepted protocol as in Mitigation Measure BIO-2, that would ensure proper handling of this resource and that the range of this species would not be restricted. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would prevent impacts to the Le Conte's thrasher and other nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through August 31) with surveys conducted by an acceptable biologist, prior to the start of construction activities, on the construction site and within 500 feet of the construction site or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet.

In order to address the designation, responsibilities, and participation of Native American tribal monitors during excavation and other ground-disturbing activities within undisturbed native soils and construction scheduling please note the discussion of Mitigation Measures CUL-1 through CUL-6 and TCR-1 through TCR-3.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerate" 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.)

No Impact. As stated in the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Transportation discussions above, the project would not produce any trip-generating structures (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). As noted in this report, the entire road is in a semi-remote area of Riverside County with only the Coachella Valley Preserve located approximately in the middle length of the entire road. There are no recent, current, or foreseeable projects in the area that would contribute to the effects of this project or vice versa in a manner that would be cumulatively considerable. The project does not induce growth by itself or in a cumulative effect with other projects in the region. No impact is identified and no mitigation is proposed.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As stated previously, the proposed project would have no impact with respect to Aesthetics, Agricultural and Forestry Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing, and Recreation. Additionally, the proposed project would have less than significant impact with respect to Air Quality, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Public Services, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. Finally, the proposed project would have less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated with respect to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Tribal Cultural Resources. Based on the project description and the preceding responses, development of the proposed project would not cause substantial adverse effects to human beings because all potentially significant impacts of the proposed project would be reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of mitigation measures discussed, including to Tribal Cultural Resources and other issues that may indirectly affect human beings.

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APPENDIX A

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PLAN CHECKLIST

This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan has been prepared for use in implementing mitigation for the:

Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project

The program has been prepared in compliance with State law and the IS prepared for the project by the County of Riverside.

CEQA requires the adoption of a reporting or monitoring program for those measures placed on a project to mitigate or avoid adverse effects on the environment (Public Resource Code Section 21081.6). The law states that the reporting or monitoring program shall be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation.

The monitoring program contains the following elements:

1. The mitigation measures are recorded with the action and procedure necessary to ensure compliance. In some instances, one action may be used to verify implementation of several mitigation measures.
2. A procedure for compliance and verification has been outlined for each action necessary. This procedure designates who will take action, what action will be taken and when, and to whom and when compliance will be reported.
3. The program has been designed to be flexible. As monitoring progresses, changes to compliance procedures may be necessary based on recommendations by those responsible for the program. As changes are made, new monitoring compliance procedures and records will be developed and incorporated into the program.

This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan includes mitigation identified in the IS.

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Project File Name: Thousand Palms Canyon Road Widening Project **Applicant:** County of Riverside, California

Prepared by: LSA **Date:**

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Air Quality						
The following are the typical SCAQMD Air Quality Best Management Practices for the Coachella Valley. There are no construction impacts for the proposed project; however, these control measures would be the standard air quality measures for controlling construction fugitive dust emissions.						
Backfilling 01-1 Stabilize backfill material when not actively handling; and 01-2 Stabilize backfill material during handling; and 01-3 Stabilize soil at completion of activity. • Mix backfill soil with water prior to moving • Dedicate water truck or high capacity hose to backfilling equipment • Empty loader bucket slowly so that no dust plumes are generated • Minimize drop height from loader bucket	County or designee	Daily during backfill operations	Daily during backfill operations	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Clearing and Grubbing 02-1 Maintain stability of soil through pre-watering of site prior to clearing and grubbing; and 02-2 Stabilize soil during clearing and grubbing activities; and 02-3 Stabilize soil immediately after clearing and grubbing activities. • Maintain live perennial vegetation where possible • Apply water in sufficient quantity to prevent generation of dust plumes	County or designee	Daily during clearing and grubbing operations	Daily during clearing and grubbing operations	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Clearing Forms			County or designee	Daily while clearing forms	Daily while clearing forms	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
03-1 03-2 03-3	Use water spray to clear forms; or Use sweeping and water spray to clear forms; or Use vacuum system to clear forms.	• Use of high pressure air to clear forms may cause exceedance of Rule requirements						
Crushing			County or designee	Daily while crushing	Daily while crushing	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
04-1 04-2	Stabilize surface soils prior to operation of support equipment; and Stabilize material after crushing.	• Follow permit conditions for crushing equipment • Pre-water material prior to loading into crusher • Monitor crusher emissions opacity • Apply water to crushed material to prevent dust plumes						
Cut and Fill			County or designee	Daily during cut and fill operations	Daily during cut and fill operations	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
05-1 05-2	Pre-water soils prior to cut and fill activities; and Stabilize soil during and after cut and fill activities.	• For large sites, pre-water with sprinklers or water trucks and allow time for penetration • Use water trucks/pulls to water soils to depth of cut prior to subsequent cuts						

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Demolition – Mechanical/Manual			County or designee	Daily during Demolition	Daily during Demolition	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
06-1	Stabilize wind erodible surfaces to reduce dust; and 06-2 Stabilize surface soil where support equipment and vehicles will operate; and 06-3 Stabilize loose soil and demolition debris; and 06-4 Comply with AQMD Rule 1403.	• Apply water in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes						
Disturbed Soil			County or designee	Daily whenever disturbed soils are present	Daily whenever disturbed soils are present	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
07-1	Stabilize disturbed soil throughout the construction site; and 07-02 Stabilize disturbed soil between structures	• Limit vehicular traffic and disturbances on soils where possible • If interior block walls are planned, install as early as possible • Apply water or a stabilizing agent in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes						

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Earthmoving Activities			County or designee	Daily during earthmoving activities	Daily during earthmoving activities	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
08-1	Pre-apply water to depth of proposed cuts; and	• Grade each project phase separately, timed to coincide with construction phase • Upwind fencing can prevent material movement on site • Apply water or a stabilizing agent in sufficient quantities to prevent the generation of visible dust plumes						
08-2	Re-apply water as necessary to maintain soils in a damp condition and to ensure that visible emissions do not exceed 100 feet in any direction; and							
08-3	Stabilize soils once earthmoving activities are complete.							
Importing/Exporting of Bulk Materials			County or designee	Daily during Importing or Exporting	Daily during Importing or Exporting	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
09-1	Stabilize material while loading to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and	• Use tarps or other suitable enclosures on haul trucks • Check belly-dump truck seals regularly and remove any trapped rocks to prevent spillage • Comply with track-out prevention/mitigation requirements • Provide water while loading and unloading to reduce visible dust plumes						
09-2	Maintain at least six inches of freeboard on haul vehicles; and							
09-3	Stabilize material while transporting to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and							
09-4	Stabilize material while unloading to reduce fugitive dust emissions; and							
09-5	Comply with Vehicle Code Section 23114.							

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Landscaping			County or designee	Daily during landscaping	Daily during landscaping	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
10-1	Stabilize soils, materials, slopes.	• Apply water to materials to stabilize materials in a crusted condition • Maintain effective cover over materials • Stabilize sloping surfaces using soil binders until vegetation or groundcover can effectively stabilize the slopes • Hydroseed prior to rain season						
Road Shoulder Maintenance			County or designee	Daily during Road Shoulder Maintenance	Daily during Road Shoulder Maintenance	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
11-1	Apply water to unpaved shoulders prior to clearing; and	• Installation of curbing and/or paving of road shoulders can reduce recurring maintenance costs • Use of chemical dust suppressants can inhibit vegetation growth and reduce future road shoulder maintenance costs						
11-2	Apply chemical dust suppressants and/or washed gravel to maintain a stabilized surface after completing road shoulder maintenance.							

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Screening			County or designee	Daily during screening	Daily during screening	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
12-1	Pre-water material prior to screening; and	• Dedicate water truck or high capacity hose to screening operation • Drop material through the screen slowly and minimize drop height • Install wind barrier with a porosity of no more than 50% upwind of screen to the height of the drop point						
12-2	Limit fugitive dust emissions to opacity and plume length standards; and							
12-3	Stabilize material immediately after screening.							
Staging Areas			County or designee	Daily while using staging areas	Daily while using staging areas	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
13-1	Stabilize staging areas during use; and	• Limit size of staging area • Limit vehicle speeds to 15 miles per hour • Limit number and size of staging area entrances/exits						
13-2	Stabilize staging area soils at project completion.							
Stockpiles/Bulk Material Handling			County or designee	Daily during construction	Daily during construction	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
14-1	Stabilize stockpiled materials.	• Add or remove material from the downwind portion of the storage pile • Maintain storage piles to avoid steep sides or faces						
14-2	Stockpiles within 100 yards of off-site occupied buildings must not be greater than eight feet in height; or must have a road bladed to the top to allow water truck access or must have an operational water irrigation system that is capable of complete stockpile coverage.							

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Traffic Areas for Construction Activities								
15-1 15-2 15-3	Stabilize all off-road traffic and parking areas; and Stabilize all haul routes; and Direct construction traffic over established haul routes.	• Apply gravel/paving to all haul routes as soon as possible to all future roadway areas • Barriers can be used to ensure vehicles are only used on established parking areas/haul routes	County or designee	Daily during construction	Daily during construction	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Trenching								
16-1 16.2	Stabilize surface soils where trencher or excavator and support equipment will operate; and Stabilize soils at the completion of trenching activities.	• Pre-watering of soils prior to trenching is an effective preventive measure. • For deep trenching activities, pre-trench to 18 inches soak soils via the pre-trench and resuming trenching • Washing mud and soils from equipment at the conclusion of trenching activities can prevent crusting and drying of soil on equipment	County or designee	During all Trenching operations	During all Trenching operations	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Truck Loading								
17-1 17.2	Pre-water material prior to loading; and Ensure that freeboard exceeds six inches (CVC 23114)	• Empty loader bucket such that no visible dust plumes are created • Ensure that the loader bucket is close to the truck to minimize drop height while loading	County or designee	During all Truck Loading Operations	During all Truck Loading Operations	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action			Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
Turf Overseeding			N/A For activities at this site location	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
18-1	Apply sufficient water immediately prior to conducting turf vacuuming activities to meet opacity and plume length standards; and	• Haul waste material immediately off site						
18-2	Cover haul vehicles prior to exiting the site.							
Unpaved Roads/Parking Lots			County or designee	During appropriate times	During appropriate times	Inspections		Issuance or compliance requirements
19-1	Stabilize soils to meet the applicable performance standards; and	• Restricting vehicular access to established unpaved travel paths and parking lots can reduce stabilization requirements						
19-2	Limit vehicular travel to established unpaved roads (haul routes) and unpaved parking lots.							
Vacant Land			County or designee	Daily during construction	Daily	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
20-1	In instances where vacant lots are 0.10 acre or larger and have a cumulative area of 500 square feet or more that are driven over and/or used by motor vehicles and/or off-road vehicles, prevent motor vehicle and/or off-road vehicle trespassing, parking and/or access by installing barriers, curbs, fences, gates, posts, signs, shrubs,	• Identify a dust control supervisor that is employed by or contracted with the property owner or developer, is on the site or available on-site within 30 minutes during working hours, has the authority to expeditiously employ sufficient dust mitigation measures to ensure compliance with all Rule requirements, and has completed the AQMD Fugitive Dust Control Class and has been issued a valid						

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
trees or other effective control measures. Certificate of Completion for the class; and • Notify the SCAQMD Executive Officer in writing within 30 days after the site no longer qualifies as a large operation.						
Fugitive Dust Source Category Control Actions						
Earthmoving (except construction cutting and filling areas, and mining operations) (1a) Maintain soil moisture content at a minimum of 12 percent, as determined by the ASTM [American Society for Testing and Materials] method D2216, or other equivalent method approved by the Executive Officer, the California Air Resources Board, and the U.S. EPA. Two soil moisture evaluations must be conducted during the first three hours of active operations during a calendar day, and two such evaluations each subsequent four-hour period of active operations; OR (1a-1) For any earthmoving which is more than 100 feet from all property lines, conduct watering as necessary to prevent visible dust emissions from exceeding 100 feet in length in any direction.	County or designee	Daily during construction	Each day	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Earthmoving: Construction fill areas (1b) Maintain soil moisture content at a minimum of 12 percent, as determined by ASTM method D2216, or other equivalent method approved by the Executive Officer, the California Air Resources Board, and the U.S. EPA. For areas which have an optimum moisture content for compaction of less than 12 percent, as determined by ASTM Method 1557 or other equivalent method approved by the Executive Officer and the California Air Resources Board and the U.S. EPA, complete the compaction process as expeditiously as possible after achieving at least 70	County or designee	Daily during construction	Each day	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
percent of the optimum soil moisture content. Two soil moisture evaluations must be conducted during the first three hours of active operations during a calendar day, and two such evaluations during each subsequent four-hour period of active operations.						
Earthmoving: Construction cut areas and mining operations (1c) Conduct watering as necessary to prevent visible emissions from extending more than 100 feet beyond the active cut or mining area unless the area is inaccessible to watering vehicles due to slope conditions or other safety factors.	County or designee	Daily during construction	Each day	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Disturbed surface areas (except completed grading areas) (2a/b) Apply dust suppression in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface. Any areas which cannot be stabilized, as evidenced by wind driven fugitive dust must have an application of water at least twice per day to at least 80 percent of the unstabilized area.	County or designee	Daily	Each day	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Disturbed Surface Areas: Completed Grading Areas (2c) Apply chemical stabilizers within five working days of grading completion; OR (2d) Take actions (3a) or (3c) specified for inactive disturbed surface areas.	County or designee	Within 5 working days prior to grading completion	During application timeframe	Inspections		Issuance of Stop Work Orders
Inactive Disturbed Surface Areas	County or designee	Daily with evidence of wind driven dust	Daily with evidence of wind driven dust	Inspections		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
(3a) Apply water to at least 80 percent of all inactive disturbed surface areas on a daily basis when there is evidence of wind driven fugitive dust, excluding any areas which are inaccessible to watering vehicles due to excessive slope or other safety conditions; OR (3b) Apply dust suppressants in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface; OR (3c) Establish vegetative groundcover within 21 days after active operations have ceased. Groundcover must be of sufficient density to expose less than 30 percent of unstabilized ground within 90 days of planting, and at all times thereafter; OR (3d) Utilize any combination of control actions (3a), (3b), and (3c) such that, in total, these actions apply to all inactive disturbed surface areas.						
Unpaved Roads (4a) Water all roads used for any vehicular traffic at least once per every two hours of active operations [3 times per normal 8 hour work day]; OR (4b) Water all roads used for any vehicular traffic once daily and restrict vehicle speeds to 15 miles per hour; OR (4c) Apply a chemical stabilizer to all unpaved road surfaces in sufficient quantity and frequency to maintain a stabilized surface.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspections		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
Open Storage Piles (5a) Apply chemical stabilizers; OR (5b) Apply water to at least 80 percent of the surface area of all open storage piles on a daily basis when there is evidence of wind driven fugitive dust; OR (5c) Install temporary coverings; OR (5d) Install a three-sided enclosure with walls no more than 50 percent porosity which extend, at the minimum, to the top of the pile. This option may only be used at aggregate-related plants or at center manufacturing facilities.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspections		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
All Categories (6a) Any other control measures approved by the Executive Officer and the U.S. EPA as equivalent to the methods specified in Table 2 may be used.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspections		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
Biological Resources						
BIO-1: Pre-construction Le Conte's Thrasher Survey. In order to avoid impacts to the Le Conte's thrasher and other nesting birds, per the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) during the nesting season (January 15 through August 31), prior to the start of construction activities, surveys shall be conducted by an acceptable biologist on the construction site and within 500 feet of the construction site, or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet. If nesting Le Conte's thrashers are found, a 500-foot Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), or to the property boundary if less than 500 feet, shall be established around the nest site. The ESA shall be staked and flagged. No construction shall be permitted within the ESA during the breeding season of January 15 through August 31 or until the young have fledged.	County or designee	Prior to construction	Prior to construction	On-site inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
BIO-2: Pre-construction Burrowing Owl Survey. A pre-construction burrowing owl survey would be conducted in all areas of suitable habitat within project limit using an accepted protocol. Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall survey the construction area including a 500-foot buffer, or to the edge of the property if less than 500 feet, for burrows that could be used by burrowing owl. If a burrow is located, the biologist shall determine whether an owl is present in the burrow. If the burrow is determined to be occupied, the burrow shall be flagged and a 160-foot buffer during the non-breeding season or a 250-foot buffer during the breeding season or a buffer to the edge of the property boundary if less than 500 feet shall be established around the burrow. The buffer area shall be staked and flagged. No development activities shall be permitted within the buffer until the young are no longer dependent on the burrow.	County or designee	Prior to construction	Prior to issuance of demolition permits	Survey results		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
BIO-3. Prior to commencement of construction activities for permanent impacts in jurisdictional features, the project shall obtain authorizations from the Regional Water Quality Control Board	County or designee	Prior to construction	Prior to construction	On-site inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
(RWQCB) pursuant to *Procedures for Discharge for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State or State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ* and from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) pursuant to Section 1602 of the California Fish and Game Code have been obtained.. The type, amount, and location of any required mitigation (including payment of fees or purchase of credits) shall be established by each regulatory agency during the review of any required authorization. As determined appropriate by each agency, the following shall be incorporated into required permit(s): 1. Off-site replacement and/or restoration of RWQCB jurisdictional "waters of the State" within the Colorado River Watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 or within an adjacent watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts, and for any temporary impacts to restore the impact area to pre-project conditions (i.e., pre-project contours and revegetate where applicable). Off-site mitigation may occur on land acquired for the purpose of in-perpetuity preservation, or through the purchase of mitigation credits at an agency-approved off-site mitigation bank. 2. Off-site replacement and/or restoration of CDFW jurisdictional streambed and associated riparian habitat within the Colorado River Watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 or within an adjacent watershed at a ratio no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts, and for any temporary impacts to restore the impact area to pre-project conditions (i.e., pre-project contours and revegetate where applicable). Off-site mitigation may occur on land acquired for the purpose of in-perpetuity preservation, or through the purchase of mitigation credits at an agency-approved off-site mitigation bank.						
BIO-4: Worker Environmental Awareness Program. A Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) shall be implemented for work crews by a qualified biologist(s) prior to the commencement of construction activities and prior to site access by workers. Training materials and briefings shall include but not be limited to, discussion of	A Qualified Biologist from County or Designee	Once prior to construction	Once prior to construction	Inspection during WEAP training session		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts, the CVMSHCP, the consequences of noncompliance with project permitting requirements, identification and values of special-status plant and wildlife species and sensitive natural plant community habitats, fire protection measures, and hazardous substance spill prevention and containment measures.						
Cultural Resources						
CUL-1: Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan. The Project Archaeologist, in consultation with the Monitoring Tribe(s), and the County shall develop a Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan (CRMP) to address the details, timing, and responsibility of all archaeological and cultural activities that will occur on the project site. Details in the CRMP shall include: • Project grading and development scheduling. • The coordination of a monitoring schedule as agreed upon by the Monitoring Tribe(s), the Project Archaeologist, and the County. • The protocols and stipulations that the County, Monitoring Tribe(s), and Project Archaeologist shall follow in the event of inadvertent cultural resources discoveries, including any newly discovered cultural resources. They shall have the authority to stop and redirect excavation in order to evaluate the significance of any archaeological resources discovered within 60 feet of the find.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
CUL-2: Train Construction Personnel. Prior to any grading, excavation, and/or other ground-disturbing activities on the project site, the Project Archaeologist and the Monitoring Tribe(s) shall conduct cultural resources sensitivity training for all construction personnel. Construction personnel shall be informed of the types of archaeological resources that may be encountered and of the proper procedures to be enacted in the event of an inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources or human remains. The County's construction manager shall ensure that construction personnel are made available for and attend the training, and shall retain documentation demonstrating attendance.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
CUL-3: All artifacts/cultural material discovered at the project site shall be inventoried and analyzed by the Project Archaeologist and Native American tribal monitor(s). If any cultural materials of Native American	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
origin are discovered, all activities in the immediate vicinity of the find (within a 60-foot radius) shall stop. The Project Archaeologist and Native American tribal monitor(s) shall analyze the Native American cultural materials for identification as everyday life and/or religious or sacred items, cultural affiliation, temporal placement, and function, as deemed possible. The significance of Native American resources shall be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and shall consider the religious beliefs, customs, and practices of the tribe(s). All items found in association with Native American human remains shall be considered grave goods or sacred in origin and subject to special handling.						
CUL-4: In the event that Native American cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during the course of grading for this project, the following procedures shall be carried out for the treatment and disposition of the discoveries: • Curation: The County shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources. Native American cultural materials that cannot be avoided or relocated at the project site shall be prepared for curation. The Project Archaeologist, following consultation with the Monitoring Tribe(s), shall deliver the materials to a qualified repository in Riverside County that meets or exceeds federal standards per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 36, Part 79, and that shall be made available to all qualified researchers and tribal representatives. • Temporary On-Site Curation and Storage: During the course of construction, all discovered resources shall be temporarily curated in a secure location on site. The removal of any cultural materials from the project site will need to be thoroughly inventoried, with Native American Tribal Monitor oversight of the process. • Treatment and Final Disposition: The County shall relinquish ownership of all cultural resources, including sacred items, burial goods, and all cultural materials and nonhuman remains, as part of the required mitigation for impacts to cultural resources within the County right-of-way. The County shall relinquish the cultural materials through the following methods and provide the cultural materials to the Consulting Tribe(s):	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
o For on-site reburial of the discovered items this shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from any future impacts. Reburial shall not occur until all cataloguing and basic recordation have been completed.						
CUL-5: Reporting. The Project Archaeologist shall prepare a final archaeological report within 60 days of project completion. The report shall follow Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) Guidelines and County requirements and shall include at a minimum: a discussion of monitoring methods and techniques used; the results of the monitoring program, including any cultural materials recovered; an inventory of any resources recovered; updated State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms, if any, and any other site(s) identified; final disposition of the resources; and any additional recommendations. A final copy shall be submitted to the County, the Eastern Information Center, and the Monitoring Tribe(s).	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
CUL-6: In the event human remains are encountered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur and halt all work within 60 feet until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The archaeologist who discovered the remains will contact the County so that they may work with the MLD to inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD will have the opportunity to offer recommendations for the disposition of the remains.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
Hydrology and Water Quality						
Less than significant. No mitigation required. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would detail the BMPs to be implemented during construction. Construction BMPs would include, but not be limited to, Erosion Control and Sediment Control BMPs designed to minimize the erosion and retain sediment on	County or designee	Daily during construction	Daily during construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
site, and Good Housekeeping BMPs to prevent spills, leaks, and discharge of construction debris and waste into receiving waters.						
Noise						
Less than significant. No mitigation required. For noise and vibration, there are no operational Best Management Plans (BMPs) or standard measures for this project because there are no operational noise and vibration impacts. Also, there are no temporary construction vibration impacts. Although temporary construction noise impacts are considered less than significant, the noise section provides standard conditions to further minimize construction noise.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
Transportation						
Avoidance Measure: TRA-1. A detailed Traffic Management Plan shall be prepared during the construction bid phase of the project and approved by the Riverside County Transportation Department. The objective of the Stage Construction, Traffic Control, and Detours Plan is to minimize the potential impacts that construction activities may have on the traveling public and emergency services providers. Preparation of the plan shall be coordinated with the emergency services providers in the project vicinity to minimize response delays resulting from traffic delays, temporary lane closures, and detours during project construction.	County or designee	During construction	During construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order
Tribal Cultural Resources						
TCR-1: Tribal Monitoring. At least 30 days prior to the commencement of ground-disturbing activity, a Riverside County Consultant shall provide a Native American Monitoring Agreement with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians to the County for review and approval.	County or designee	30 days prior to construction	30 days prior to construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of Work Order Not to Begin
TCR-2: Treatment and Final Disposition of Cultural Resources. Any archaeological resource unearthed during construction activities shall be evaluated by the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American Monitor(s). If the resource is determined to be Native American in origin, any such resource (including sacred items, burial goods, and all	County or designee	Daily during construction	Daily during construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance of a Stop Work Order

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
archaeological artifacts and non-human remains) shall be addressed through one or more of the following methods: • Preservation in place by accommodating on-site reburial of the discovered items with the consulting Native American tribe(s). This shall include measures and provisions to protect the future reburial area from any future impacts. Reburial shall not occur until all cataloging and recordation efforts have been completed. • A curation agreement with an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR Part 79. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility within Riverside County, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation. • If more than one Native American Tribe or band is involved with the project, consensus needs to be reached amongst all Tribes involved regarding the repository. If consensus cannot be reached, the County of Riverside will select an appropriate qualified repository within Riverside County that meets federal standards per 36 CFR 79.						
TCR-3: Discovery of Human Remains. In the event that human remains (or remains that may be human) are discovered within the construction areas, all activity within 100 feet of the find shall be immediately halted. Any discovery of human remains shall be immediately reported by the Qualified Archaeologist and Native American monitor(s) to the County Coroner. If the human remains are determined to be Native American, the County Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), who shall appoint a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) in accordance with California Public Resources Code 5097.98. The discovery of any Native American human remains and/or funerary objects shall be kept confidential and secure to prevent any further disturbance. In the case where discovered human remains cannot be fully documented and recovered on the same day, the remains and associated funerary objects, sacred objects and/or objects of cultural patrimony shall be covered with an opaque material or placed in opaque cloth bags. A physical barrier (e.g., metal plate, concrete slab	County or designee	Daily during construction and all activities occurring within 100 feet shall STOP when human remains found	Daily during construction	Inspection or survey		Issuance or a Stop Work Order.

Mitigation Measure No./Implementing Action	Responsible for Monitoring	Monitoring Frequency	Timing of Verification	Method of Verification	Verified Date/ Initials	Sanctions for Noncompliance
that can be moved by heavy equipment) shall be placed over the excavation opening to protect the remains until examination by the MLD can occur. If this type of protective barrier is not available, a 24-hour guard shall be posted outside of working hours. The MLD shall complete his or her inspection and make recommendations or preferences for treatment within 48 hours of being granted access to the site. The MLD shall identify and direct the most appropriate means of treating the human remains and any associated funerary object(s). As determined through consultation with the County, the MLD shall make recommendations that allow the burial to remain in situ and protected. Once complete, a final report of all activities associated with or resulting from the discovery of human remains shall be submitted to the NAHC.						

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