



Project Name: State Route 128 Hopper Slough Bridge Replacement Project

DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 04-NAP-128-5.12

EA: 04-4J830

EFIS ID: 0416000038

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FINDINGS**

FOR

**REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING BRIDGE THAT SPANS BALE
SLOUGH AT POST MILE (PM) 5.12 ON STATE ROUTE 128, IN NAPA COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA.**

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 3, Section 15091) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Chapter 11, Section 1501 et seq.). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Aesthetics

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Implementation of the Preferred Build Alternative would substantially damage scenic resources, primarily related to the removal of mature riparian oak trees along Bale Slough. Although mitigation will be implemented to reduce the severity of the impact, the impact would still be considered significant after mitigation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs), Mitigation Measures (MMs), and Project Features (PFs) have been incorporated as conditions of project approval. Those that would reduce potentially significant impacts to Aesthetic resources are listed below.

MM BIO 1: After construction, Caltrans would offset the loss of riparian trees along Bale Slough through tree replanting. Caltrans will develop a mitigation plan in coordination with state and federal resource agencies for their approval. The plan would include onsite and offsite replanting as Caltrans' right of way is not large enough to conduct all tree planting onsite. Only native trees, typical to those species found at the site, will be used in the planting plan.

MM BIO 2: Caltrans would restore temporarily disturbed areas to the maximum extent practicable. Exposed slopes and bare ground would be reseeded with native and appropriate non-invasive grasses and native shrubs to stabilize and prevent erosion. Where disturbance includes the removal of trees and woody shrubs, native species would be replanted at a ratio to be determined during PS&E. The Bale Slough channel banks will be recontoured to a more natural channel width following bridge widening activities. This would both enhance the quality of aquatic stream habitat through daylighting and expanding the channel opening as well as reduce erosion and scour from the existing bridge that could cause increased siltation of downstream waters. California red-legged frog aquatic non-breeding habitat located along Bale Slough would be improved by introducing a more naturalized streambed with native streamside vegetation. Specified acreages of beneficial impacts due to this channel expansion will be calculated during coordination and permitting with regulatory agencies after project approval.

PF AES 1: Existing trees and vegetation would be preserved to the extent feasible. Trees and vegetation outside of the clearing and grubbing limits would be protected from the contractor's operations, equipment, and materials storage. Tree trimming and pruning, where required, would be under the direction of a qualified biologist.

PF BIO 3: Vegetation and tree removal will be minimized as much as practicable to complete the Project. Within the footprint, vegetation will only be removed as needed to provide access and necessary workspace or where permanent structures will be constructed, and earthwork will be performed. Where possible, vegetation will be cut above the soil level to promote the regrowth of existing plants following the end of construction. This will limit the amount of vegetation removed, and minimize the amount of bare soil created, allowing the possibility of cut trees to resprout, and supporting native species in the region.

PF BIO 4: Caltrans will delineate construction areas and environmentally sensitive areas (ESA) (defined as areas containing sensitive habitats adjacent to or within construction work areas for which physical disturbance is not allowed) on the final construction plans. The approved biological monitor will be onsite to direct the installation of high-visibility, orange ESA fencing to prevent encroachment of construction personnel and equipment onto sensitive areas during construction activities, as needed. Staging, storage, and parking areas will be located on paved or graveled surfaces within Caltrans' right of way and away from any designated ESAs, as specified by the Project biologist, to avoid construction impacts to natural communities.

Equipment and materials storage sites will be located as far away from residential, and park uses as practicable. At the discretion of the Caltrans biologist, ESA fencing may be removed at times when construction is no longer active in the area.

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The implementation of the Preferred Build Alternative would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point). Although mitigation will be implemented to reduce the severity of the impact, the impact would still be considered significant after mitigation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

AMMs, MMs, and PFs have been incorporated as conditions of project approval. Those that would reduce potentially significant impacts to Aesthetic resources are MM BIO 1, MM BIO 2, PF AES 1, PF BIO 3, and PF BIO 4, which are described above, as well as the measures listed below.

MM BIO 3: To comply with Executive Order (EO) 13112: Caltrans will minimize the spread of invasive and nonnative plant species when restoring disturbed areas. If noxious weeds are disturbed or removed during construction activities, the contractor would contain the weeds and associated plant material and dispose of them in a manner that would not promote the spread of the species. The contractor would be responsible for obtaining all permits, licenses, and environmental clearances for properly disposing of materials. Areas subject to noxious weed removal or disturbance would be replanted with fast-growing native grasses or a native erosion control seed mixture. Where seeding is not practical, disturbed areas would be covered with heavy black plastic solarization material until the end of the project. All earthmoving equipment and seeding equipment would be thoroughly cleaned before arriving on the Project site to prevent the spread of noxious weeds from other locations.

AMM AES 2: During the design phase, Caltrans would design the bridge to incorporate see-through bridge rails that allow views of the creek and adjacent vegetation as directed by Caltrans Landscape Architecture staff.

AMM AES 3: During the design phase, Caltrans would design the concrete portions of the bridge including the concrete anchor blocks, wing walls and abutments, and

retaining walls. The design would be treated with a combination of roughening surface texture and coloring concrete to reduce glare, as directed by Caltrans Landscape Architecture staff.

AMM AES 4: Prior to completion of construction activities, Caltrans would use contour grading and slope rounding to produce smooth, flowing contours consistent with site topography, to increase context sensitivity and reduce engineered appearance of slopes.

AMM AES 5: Prior to completion of construction activities, if creek work requires the import of aggregate or creek bed materials, Caltrans would select materials that are similar in color to the native creek materials.

AMM Invasive Species 1: Prior to construction, Caltrans would include language in the bid solicitation package directing the contractor to use erosion and sediment control materials that are free of invasive species and to hydro-seed all disturbed areas with a native seed mix after construction, where appropriate for the site conditions and where plants are likely to become established.

Biological Resources

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The implementation of the Preferred Build Alternative would have a less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated on federal- and state-listed species.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Project has the potential to result in significant impacts on special-status species. However, with the implementation of mitigation measure MM BIO 2, Landscape Revegetation and Stream Habitat Enhancement (described above), these impacts would be less than significant. Currently, the current stream contains a sharp bend upstream of the bridge and is constricted by the bridge opening. Aquatic habitat is currently limited to the width of the existing abutments and its banks are characterized by non-native vegetation. The wider bridge opening and bank recontouring would restore the stream to a more natural channel width, and will be revegetated with native species, enhancing the quality of the available aquatic stream habitat. Widening the

bridge opening and channel is expected to enhance the riparian corridor by daylighting additional stream habitat as well as reducing scour upstream of the bridge.

Adverse Environmental Effects:

Implementation of the Preferred Build Alternative would have a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat. Although mitigation will be implemented to reduce the severity of the impact, the impact would still be considered significant after mitigation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

AMMs, MMs, and PFs have been incorporated as conditions of project approval. Those that would reduce potentially significant impacts to biological resources include MM BIO 1, MM BIO 2, MM BIO 3, PF AES 1, PF BIO 3, and PF BIO 4, which are described above.

Dina A. El-Tawansy
District Director
California Department of
Transportation
NEPA/CEQA Lead Agency

Dina El-Tawansy

Signature

06/21/2022

Date