

State Route 154 Drainage Rehabilitation Project

Multiple culvert locations along State Route 154 in Santa Barbara County

05-SB-154-0.0/32.84

Project ID: 0518000216

Project EA: 05-1K520

State Clearinghouse Number: 2022050438

Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

March 2023



General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: Geramaldi, Associate Environmental Planner

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project located in Santa Barbara County, California. Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act and the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. The document tells you why the project is being proposed, what alternatives have been considered for the project, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

The draft Initial Study was circulated to the public for review and comment for 30 days between May 20, 2022 and June 17, 2022. Comments received during this period are included in Appendix B. Elsewhere, language has been added throughout the document to indicate where a change has been made to the text of the document since the circulation of the draft Initial Study. Minor editorial changes and clarifications have not been so indicated.

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State Clearinghouse Number: 2022050438
05-SB-154-0.0/32.84
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Repair and replace existing culverts on State Route 154
from post miles 0.0 to 32.84 in Santa Barbara County

**INITIAL STUDY
with Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

Jason Wilkinson

Jason Wilkinson
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental Analysis, District 5
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CEQA Lead Agency

3/21/23

Date

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Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2022050438

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 05-SB-154-0.0/32.84

EA Number: 05-1K520

Project ID Number: 0518000216

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to rehabilitate existing drainage systems on State Route 154 in Santa Barbara County from post miles 0.0 to 32.84. The project will rehabilitate several storm drain culverts, which will be either repaired or replaced. At some culvert outlets, rock slope protection will be added where none currently exists. The project will also rehabilitate the Rancho Cielo (Cold Springs) Vista Point on State Route 154 by providing a hot mix asphalt overlay to the existing driveway and parking lot. Project activities will involve vegetation clearing, vegetation replanting, temporary construction access, temporary construction staging sites, temporary traffic control, pavement repaving and pavement restriping. State Route 154 is a rural two-lane conventional highway and expressway, with one lane of travel in each direction and occasional passing lanes, turn pockets and pullouts. State Route 154 crosses the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Ynez Mountains, from Los Olivos to Santa Barbara.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans, District 5.

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project will have no effect on agriculture and forest resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems.

In addition, the project will have less than significant effects to aesthetic resources, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, transportation, and wildfire.

With the following mitigation measures incorporated, the project will have a less than significant impact to biological resources:

- Compensatory mitigation will be included as part of the project for natural communities and regional habitats of concern impacted by the project. Compensatory mitigation will be at a ratio of 1 to 1 (acreage) for temporary impacts and a ratio of 3 to 1 (acreage) for permanent impacts. Replacement plantings will include appropriate native plant species, an appropriate plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success.
- The project will revegetate upland habitats impacted by the project, replacing trees at a ratio of at least 3 to 1, and seeding ground disturbance areas with native grasses and forbs.

Jason Wilkinson

Jason Wilkinson
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental Analysis, District 5
California Department of Transportation

3/21/23

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (known as NEPA). Caltrans is also the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA).

California participated in the “Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program” (Pilot Program) pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327, for more than 5 years, beginning July 1, 2007, and ending September 30, 2012. MAP-21 (Public Law 112-141), signed by President Barack Obama on July 6, 2012, amended 23 U.S. Code 327 to establish a permanent Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. As a result, Caltrans entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327 (NEPA Assignment MOU) with the Federal Highway Administration. The NEPA Assignment MOU became effective October 1, 2012, and was renewed on May 27, 2022, for a term of 10 years. In summary, Caltrans continues to assume Federal Highway Administration responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws in the same manner as was assigned under the Pilot Program, with minor changes. With NEPA Assignment, the Federal Highway Administration assigned and Caltrans assumed all of the U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary’s responsibilities under NEPA. This assignment includes projects on the State Highway System and Local Assistance projects off of the State Highway System within the State of California, except for certain categorical exclusions that Federal Highway Administration assigned to Caltrans under the 23 U.S. Code 326 CE Assignment MOU, projects excluded by definition, and specific project exclusions.

State Route 154 in Santa Barbara County is a rural, curving two-lane conventional highway and expressway. The route has one lane of travel in each direction, with occasional passing lanes, turn pockets and pullouts. State Route 154 crosses the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Ynez Mountains, connecting the community of Los Olivos in the north with the city of Santa Barbara in the south. This route is an alternative and connector route to U.S. Route 101.

Caltrans proposes to rehabilitate existing drainage structures, add traffic monitoring systems, and repair pavement on State Route 154 from post miles 0.0 to 32.84. Project activities will occur at multiple work locations along State Route 154. See Figure 1-1, Project Vicinity Map, and Figure 1-2, Project Location Map, for the project limits and work locations. More detailed mapping for is provided in Appendix F, *Preliminary Project Layouts*.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

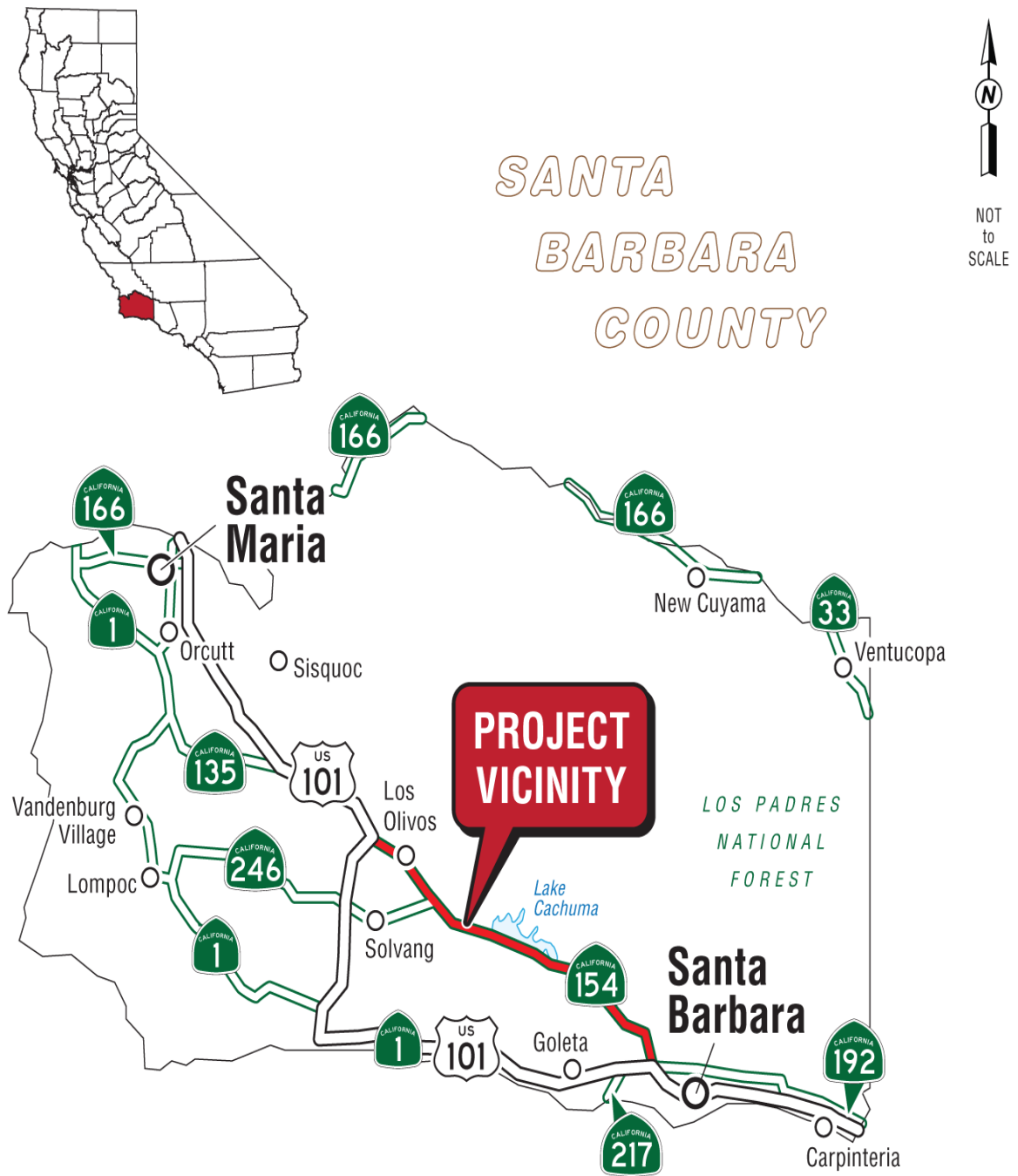


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



The project is programmed in the 2020 State Highway Operation and Protection Program and is eligible for Federal Aid funding. The total current estimated cost for the project was updated since the circulation of the draft Initial Study. Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimates for the project cost and construction schedule have been refined. The total current estimated cost for the project has been updated to approximately \$15,300,000, while the total escalated estimated cost is approximately \$16,800,000. Project construction is anticipated to start around November 2025, with construction completion anticipated around December 2026.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve assets in poor condition by restoring damaged culverts, improving traffic monitoring, and extending the service life of existing pavement.

1.2.2 Need

Drainage System Reports from the Caltrans Culvert Inspection Program recommend the repair or replacement of damaged culverts that are in poor condition due to corrosion, deformation, or perforation, or that are in an overall state of deterioration having the potential to result in roadway or embankment failure. Existing traffic management systems need improving, requiring the installation of additional traffic management systems to better collect traffic data and provide traffic information to the traveling public. The existing pavement at the Rancho Cielo (Cold Springs) Vista Point is exhibiting distress and, if left uncorrected, will continue to deteriorate.

1.3 Project Description

This section describes the project alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need of the project, while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. There are two alternatives under consideration for this project: a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative. Project alternatives are further discussed in Section 1.4, *Project Alternatives*.

The project is in Santa Barbara County on State Route 154 and runs from post mile 0.0 at the interchange of U.S. Route 101 and State Route 154 near Los Olivos to post mile 32.84 at the interchange of U.S. Route 101 and State Route 154 in the city of Santa Barbara. The project spans approximately 33 miles, the entire length of State Route 154. Preliminary layouts showing the project limits and all project-related work and the associated locations are presented in Appendix F.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the project construction duration has been refined and is estimated to take approximately 250 working days, over a period of one year.

1.3.1 Culvert Improvements

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the number of drainage systems included in the project has been reduced by two systems. The project will repair or replace 16 drainage systems at various locations on State Route 154 to improve drainage functionality and longevity as well as protect the roadway and embankments from potential culvert failures. Culvert sizes vary from 18 inches to 125 inches in diameter, and culvert lengths vary from 36 feet to 780 feet long. The existing culvert condition, location and surrounding terrain will determine which repair or replacement method is most appropriate. It is anticipated that culverts with a diameter of 18 inches will be replaced with 24-inch-diameter culverts, while all other culverts replaced will match existing diameters. The project will also install rock slope protection at seven culvert outlet locations to improve drainage conditions.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the anticipated temporary and permanent easements required for the project have been refined and the following discussion has been updated. Permanent drainage easements and/or right-of-way acquisitions will be required for existing culverts located outside of the Caltrans right-of-way. In addition, temporary construction easements will be required due to terrain conditions to access existing culverts.

The project will construct temporary access roads at certain culvert locations. Temporary access roads will result in direct temporary disturbance to 10 properties adjacent to culvert work locations. The following list identifies the properties (identified by their nine-digit Accessor's Parcel Number) where temporary access roads are required, along with the approximate level of disturbance:

- 1) 141-130-023: Approximately 0.14 acre of disturbance.
- 2) 145-160-075: Approximately 0.02 acre of disturbance.
- 3) 153-010-025: Approximately 0.27 acre of disturbance.
- 4) 153-010-026: Approximately 0.04 acre of disturbance.
- 5) 153-010-028: Approximately 0.12 acre of disturbance.
- 6) 153-160-024: Approximately 0.08 acre of disturbance.
- 7) 153-290-004: Approximately 0.04 acre of disturbance.
- 8) 153-330-024: Approximately 0.04 acre of disturbance.
- 9) 153-340-030: Approximately 0.11 acre of disturbance.
- 10) 153-380-001: Approximately 0.03 acre of disturbance.

The anticipated limits of disturbance for each property are shown in Appendix F, *Preliminary Project Layouts*.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the anticipated drainage easements required for the project have been refined and the following discussion has been updated. The project will require permanent drainage easements from two properties for additional culvert access and associated features. New culvert features will be added to existing culvert structures. The following list identifies the properties (identified by their nine-digit Accessor's Parcel Number) where drainage easements are required, along with the approximate required acreage:

- 1) 153-340-027: Approximately 0.03 acre of drainage easement
- 2) 153-340-030: Approximately 0.07 acre of drainage easement

Culvert replacement and repair work will require the use of construction equipment, pavement work, drainage easements access, temporary construction easements, temporary access routes, temporary staging sites, temporary traffic control, vegetation clearing, and vegetation restoration. The project will minimize traffic disruptions by staging work activities in a manner that will ensure temporary traffic control (lane closures, shoulder closures, flagging, etc.) are limited to one location at a time.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the project now proposes to implement night work for culvert-related work at suitable locations. Night work will be implemented to help minimize temporary traffic disruptions caused by construction activities and is expected to occur between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Temporary lane closures implemented during night work will follow Caltrans traffic control standards and will be included in the project's construction details. The following culvert locations will require approximately 3-5 days of night work: at post mile 0.33, 1.03, 23.59, 24.83, 29.28 and 30.14. The following culvert locations will require approximately 10 days of night work: at post mile 22.51, 25.70, and 26.76. These culvert locations have limited space and access for construction operations. The culvert at post mile 27.67 will require approximately 25 days of night work. This culvert is located at the bottom of a ravine, with very limited space and access for construction operations. The project could potentially involve 70 to 90 days of night work for all culvert related activities. Specific details and schedules associated with potential nightwork will be refined during the Design phase of the project, with further refinements occurring during project construction as necessary.

1.3.2 Traffic Monitoring

To better inform the traveling public, the project will install traffic management systems that include a changeable message sign and a census station on State Route 154. Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, one census

station is planned rather than several traffic count stations. The changeable message sign will be used to inform southbound travelers on State Route 154. The census station will be used to collect traffic information and conditions on State Route 154. The traffic management systems will be installed within the Caltrans right-of-way, and no construction activities related to their installation will encroach on any adjacent properties. Installation of traffic management systems will require the use of construction equipment, pavement work, temporary staging sites, temporary traffic control, trenching, excavations, vegetation clearing, and vegetation restoration. The project will install traffic management systems at one location at a time to minimize traffic disruptions.

1.3.3 Pavement Restoration

Pavement at the Rancho Cielo (Cold Springs) Vista Point needs reconditioning. The existing pavement shows signs of wear and deterioration and, if left untreated, will continue to deteriorate. Culvert work will also occur at the vista point at the same time as the pavement restoration. Vegetation clearing or removal is not anticipated for the repaving work. Pavement restoration will involve use of construction equipment, pavement work, temporary staging sites, temporary closure, and temporary traffic control.

Parking and Americans with Disabilities Act markings at the vista point will be restored upon completion of all paving operations. The existing interpretive signs and exhibits at the vista point will be protected during pavement restoration work and will not be modified or altered by the project.

1.4 Project Alternatives

Two alternatives are under consideration for the project: a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

The Build Alternative under consideration was developed by an interdisciplinary team. Several criteria were considered when evaluating the alternatives for the project, including the project's purpose and need, cost, design, construction strategies, and environmental impacts.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

The Build Alternative meets the purpose and need of the project by addressing the deterioration of the existing culverts and the existing pavement, while also providing additional traffic information to the traveling public with the traffic monitoring improvements.

Under the Build Alternative, the project will result in temporary and permanent impacts to environmental resources. Temporary impacts will result from the various construction activities required to complete the project. Permanent

impacts will result from the construction of new highway and drainage features. All temporary and permanent impacts associated with the project are anticipated to occur within temporary work locations associated with the project.

Culvert Improvements

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the number of drainage systems included in the project has been reduced by two systems for a total of 16 systems to be rehabilitated or replaced. The following section has been refined accordingly. The Build Alternative will involve work on several existing culvert segments as part of 16 drainage systems. This alternative will include a combination of culvert replacement and culvert repair based on the specific culvert conditions. Culvert replacement will involve the cut-and-cover method; culvert repair will involve cured-in-place pipe (also known as CIPP), slip lining or grout methods. At eight culvert outlet locations, rock slope protection will be added to improve drainage conditions. At one culvert location, the existing culvert will be abandoned in-place and a new culvert will be installed alongside of the existing one. All other culvert work will occur on existing culvert locations.

Below is a list of approximate post mile locations for each culvert site and the anticipated culvert work:

- 1) 0.33 – Replace two culvert segments, located south of the U.S. Route 101 and State Route 154 interchange.
- 2) 1.03 – Replace the existing culvert and install rock slope protection.
- 3) 6.81 – Repair and replace portions of the existing culvert.
- 4) 6.87 – Repair and replace portions of the existing culverts and install rock slope protection, located south of the Meadowvale Road intersection.
- 5) 7.54 – Repair and replace portions of the existing culverts, located north of the State Route 246 and State Route 154 interchange.
- 6) 16.85 – Repair the existing culvert.
- 7) 21.57 – Repair and replace portions of the existing culvert, located at Paradise Road intersection.
- 8) 22.00 – Repair and replace portions of the existing culvert, located south of the Paradise Road intersection.
- 9) 22.51 – Replace and repair portions of the existing culvert and install rock slope protection, located at the Rancho Cielo (Cold Springs) Vista Point.
- 10) 23.59 – Repair the existing culvert and install rock slope protection, located south of Stagecoach Road.

- 11) 24.83 – Replace the existing culvert and install rock slope protection, located south of East Camino Cielo.
- 12) 25.70 – Repair the existing culvert and install rock slope protection, located south of Hidden Valley Road.
- 13) 26.76 – Repair the existing culvert, located south of Painted Cave Road.
- 14) 27.67 – Repair the existing culvert.
- 15) 29.28 – Replace the existing culvert and install rock slope protection, located north of San Antonio Creek Road.
- 16) 30.14. – Replace the existing culvert and install rock slope protection, located south of San Antonio Creek Road.

This alternative will not install any new culverts at any new locations within the project limits.

Traffic Monitoring

The Build Alternative will install a new changeable message sign at a new location. Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the following information has been refined. The changeable message sign will be installed at postmile 6.18 in Los Olivos, just south of the intersection of State Route 154 and Edison Street. The Build Alternative will also replace a census station, which will include traffic sensors, solar power stations and control boxes. The census station will be at post mile 24.80 near East Camino Cielo.

In the draft environmental document, the project had included the installation of a census station at post mile 0.10 at the interchange of U.S. Route 101 and State Route 154. However, this census station was installed as part of an emergency order prior to the completion of this final environmental document and is no longer part of this project.

Pavement Preservation

The Build Alternative will place 0.2-foot of hot mix asphalt overlay to repave the existing pavement at the Rancho Cielo (Cold Springs) Vista Point, located at post mile 22.51 on State Route 154. Only existing paved areas will receive the new overlay. The Build Alternative will also replace the existing asphalt curbs with new asphalt curbs and restore pavement markings and striping to match existing conditions.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, it was determined that additional working days will be required to complete all construction activities within the vista point. Pavement related work is anticipated to take about 5 to 10 working days to complete. However, the pavement related work will not start until the culvert related work is completed. Culvert related work at the vista point is anticipated to take up to 10 days to complete. It is anticipated that the

vista point will be temporarily closed to the public for approximately 15 to 20 working days within a period of about 2 to 3 weeks.

This project contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under Section 1.6, *Standard Measures Included in All Build Alternatives*.

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no work will occur on the project and therefore the project will not result in any temporary or permanent impacts to environmental resources. However, the No-Build Alternative will not address the purpose and need of the project. With the No-Build Alternative, existing culvert and pavement conditions will continue to worsen, and no improved traffic information systems will be added.

Culvert Improvements

With the No-Build Alternative, the project will not modify, replace, repair, or take any actions to address any issues on the existing 16 drainage systems. This alternative will not address the potential risk for roadway and/or embankment failures on State Route 154 as a result of culvert damage and/or culvert deterioration.

Traffic Monitoring

With the No-Build Alternative, no new changeable message sign or traffic census station will be installed on the project. This alternative will not contribute to the improvement of traffic monitoring or provide additional traffic information to the traveling public.

Pavement Preservation

With the No-Build Alternative, no pavement work, repair, or modifications will occur to address any issue on the existing pavement at the vista point. This alternative will not prevent further deterioration of the existing pavement.

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

A Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative were considered for the project. After public circulation of the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Caltrans Project Development Team for the project reviewed both alternatives. After the review was completed, the Project Development Team identified the Build Alternative as the preferred alternative for the project. Identification of the preferred alternative was based on considerations of the project's purpose and need, its effects on the environmental resources, public

comments received on the project, properties affected, anticipated construction schedule, and anticipated construction methods. The Build Alternative was determined to be the preferred approach to address the project's purpose and need to restore damaged culverts, improve traffic monitoring and extend service life of existing pavement. Although the Build Alternative will result in permanent and temporary impacts to environmental resources, with the implementation of the included avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, the project is not anticipated to result in significant impacts on environmental resources.

1.6 Standard Measures Included in All Build Alternatives

The project will include standard measures typically used on all Caltrans projects. Caltrans standard measures are considered features of the project and are evaluated as part of the project. Caltrans standard measures are not implemented to address any specific effects, impacts or circumstances associated with the project, but are instead implemented as part of the project's design to address common issues encountered on projects. Caltrans standard measures are implemented with strict guidelines, just as other Caltrans standard requirements. The measures listed below are related to environmental resources and are applicable to the project. These measures can be found in Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications document. A copy of the full document can be found at the following link:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/ccs-standard-plans-and-standard-specifications>

- 7-1 Legal Relations and Responsibility to the Public
- 10-4 Water Usage
- 10-5 Dust Control
- 10-6 Watering
- 12-1 Temporary Traffic Control
- 12-3 Temporary Traffic Control Devices
- 12-4 Traffic Control Systems
- 13-1 Water Pollution Control
- 13-2 Water Pollution Control Program
- 13-3 Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- 13-4 Job Site Management
- 13-6 Temporary Sediment Control
- 13-7 Temporary Tracking Control
- 13-10 Temporary Linear Sediment Barriers

- 14-1 Environmental Stewardship
- 14-2 Cultural Resources
- 14-6 Biological Resources
- 14-8 Noise and Vibration
- 14-9 Air Quality
- 14-10 Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling
- 14-11 Hazardous Waste and Contamination
- 14-12 Other Agency Regulatory Requirements
- 17-2 Clearing and Grubbing
- 18-1 Dust Palliatives
- 20-1 Landscape
- 20-3 Planting
- 20-4 Plant Establishment Work
- 21-2 Erosion Control Work
- 36-4 Residue Containing Lead from Paint and Thermoplastics
- 84-9 Removing Existing Marking

Prior to project construction, the project will also prepare the following plans, which may include additional project-specific measures:

- Transportation Management Plan
- Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. When needed for clarity, or as required by CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—that is, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for the project. These applications will be submitted after the project has been approved, and Caltrans will obtain the permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications prior to the start of project construction:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Section 404 Nationwide Permit.
- Regional Water Quality Control Boards: Section 401 Water Quality Certification.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement.
- California Transportation Commission: Project funding approval would occur after the Final Project Report is approved.

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Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A “No Impact” answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

“No Impact” determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the updated Visual Impact Assessment dated January 23, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics |
|--|--|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | No Impact |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | Less Than Significant Impact |

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics |
|---|---|
| c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | No Impact |

Affected Environment

The project is on State Route 154 in Santa Barbara County. State Route 154 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway within the project limits. The route crosses the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Ynez Mountains, connecting the community of Los Olivos with the city of Santa Barbara.

State Route 154, also known as the Cachuma Pass, is a rural two-lane conventional highway and expressway with occasional passing lanes, turn pockets and pullouts. The terrain through the project limits varies from rolling hills to mountain ranges that include valleys, ravines, and steep ridgelines. Throughout the region, vegetation sets the visual character, with vegetative cover consisting of mostly chaparrals, oaks, sycamores, willows, and alders. Along much of State Route 154, the topography and density of the existing roadside vegetation block long-range views to and from the highway.

Environmental Consequences

Project elements related to traffic monitoring systems, new paving and replacement guardrails will be noticeable to the traveling public. These freshly installed human-made elements will create a more utilitarian appearance and add a degree of visual clutter to the setting. The temporary loss of vegetation as a result of required vegetation clearing for project construction will also be noticeable in the area. The combination of new human-made elements and temporary loss of vegetation will cause a minor reduction of the rural character and visual quality in the immediate project area. The project will include specific measures to minimize the noticeability of individual project-related elements and the potential reduction of visual composition within the project limits.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The potential for aesthetic or visual impacts to the environment as a result of the project is anticipated to be less than significant. In addition, the project will implement the following measures to further reduce potential impacts to aesthetic and visual resources.

VIS 1: Preserve as much existing vegetation as possible. Prescriptive clearing and grubbing and grading techniques that save the most existing vegetation possible will be used.

VIS 2: Revegetate all disturbed areas with native plant species appropriate to each work location.

VIS 3: Replacement planting will include aesthetic considerations as well as inherent biological goals. Revegetation will include native trees and plants determined by the Caltrans Biologist and Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture. Revegetation will occur at the maximum extent horticulturally viable and be maintained until established.

VIS 4: All visible concrete drainage elements including but not limited to headwalls, drain inlet aprons, etc. will be colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific colors of these concrete elements will be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 5: All visible metal components related to down-drains and inlets, including but not limited to flared end sections, connectors, anchorage systems, safety cable systems, etc. will be darkened or colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific color will be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 6: All visible rock slope protection will be placed in natural-appearing shapes rather than in geometric patterns to the greatest extent possible to reduce its engineered appearance.

VIS 7: Following placement of rock slope protection, the visible rock will be colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific color will be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 8: Metal roadside elements including but not limited to guardrail, guardrail transitions, and end treatments will be stained or darkened to be visually compatible with the rural setting. The color will be determined and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 9: If vegetation control under guardrail is deemed necessary, then a natural material such as shale will be used. The selection of the vegetation control material will be determined and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 10: The changeable message sign, including but not limited to frames, poles, truss systems, catwalks, ladders, and associated hardware, will be painted or otherwise colored to visually recede into the setting. Coloring will also include the front and side frames and back panel of the electronic sign panel itself. The color will be determined and approved in conjunction with District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 11: Following construction, re-grade, and re-contour all new construction staging areas and other temporary uses as necessary to match the surrounding pre-project topography.

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Based on the Santa Barbara County Land Use Designation and Zoning Map online tool, segments of State Route 154 are adjacent to properties zoned for agricultural uses. Although agricultural properties are found adjacent to State Route 154, the project is not anticipated to affect adjacent agricultural properties or affect the existing functions of adjacent agricultural properties. Based on the Cal Fire Hub online tool, no timber operations have been identified near State Route 154.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources |
|--|---|
| 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? | No Impact |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | No Impact |

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources |
|--|---|
| c) Conflict with existing zoning, 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))? | No Impact |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |

2.1.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Considering the information in the updated Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, Noise and Water Quality Technical Assessment Memo dated February 13, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality |
|---|--|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |
| c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | Less Than Significant Impact |

Affected Environment

State Route 154 crosses a relatively rural region of Santa Barbara County, which falls within the South Central Coast Air Basin. Air quality in the region is regulated by the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District.

Santa Barbara County is non-attainment for California Ambient Air Quality Standards for airborne particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter. The county is in attainment for California ozone standards, airborne particulate matter less than 2.5 microns, and carbon monoxide.

Santa Barbara County is in attainment for all federal air quality standards, and no conformity requirements are applicable to the project.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not result in long-term impacts to air quality because the project will not alter the existing capacity of State Route 154.

Temporary construction-related activities are expected to generate some aerial pollutants, emissions and/or odors that can be noticeable or cause inconvenience to sensitive receptors and/or people in proximity of the work location. Construction activities and the operation of construction equipment will be the main contributor to aerial pollutants, emissions and/or odors. Currently, the project work locations are not near areas with large concentrations of sensitive receptors or people.

Temporary construction-related activities and operation of construction equipment are not expected to cause substantial or adverse impacts to air quality because these actions will occur for a relatively short duration and on a relatively small scale. Also, the project will include Caltrans standard measures associated with minimizing impacts to air quality. The project is expected to help reduce future vehicle and equipment emission by reducing the frequency of preventive and scheduled maintenance operations on the culverts.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The potential for air quality impacts generated by project construction activities is expected to be less than significant. In addition, the following measure will be implemented to further reduce potential impacts to air quality:

AIR 1: All applicable Caltrans Standard Measures and strategies for Air Quality, Emissions Reductions, Dust Control and Dust Palliative will be implemented during project construction.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the updated Natural Environment Study dated March 15, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources |
|--|--|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries? | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated |
| 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? | No Impact |
| 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? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| 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 |

Affected Environment

The Natural Environment Study established a Biological Study Area, which includes the areas that may be directly, indirectly, temporarily, or permanently affected by project construction and construction-related activities along with any existing habitats near the project's construction site. The Biological Study Area includes 16 different locations along a stretch of about 30 miles on State Route 154 where restorations of culverts, installation of transportation management systems and vista point overlays will occur. The Biological Study Area was expanded at some locations to include adjacent habitats to ensure the Natural Environment Study evaluated all potential project-related effects on biological resources.

Environments found within the Biological Study Area range from relatively flat open grasslands to steep mountainous slopes. Land use in the region is mostly open space, forestry, and rural agricultural. Large portions of the Biological Study Area are within the Los Padres National Forest. The Biological Study Area contains both natural features and human-made developments. Much of the Biological Study Area contains roadways, vista points, residential areas, recreational areas, and agricultural properties.

Natural Communities

The natural communities identified within the Biological Study Area include annual non-native grasslands, valley oak savanna, coast live oak woodland, California sycamore woodland, willow woodland, mulefat thickets, coastal scrub, chaparral, streams/other waters, and ruderal.

Annual non-native grassland occurs mostly in the lower elevations and is dominated by grasses not originally native to California but that have become common. Annual wildflowers are also present in localized patches. There are approximately 5.18 acres of annual non-native grassland in the Biological Study Area.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment have been refined. Currently there are approximately 6.10 acres of annual non-native grasslands within the Biological Study Area.

Valley oak savanna are grasslands that are sparsely populated, mostly by oak trees, and includes some shrubs. These grasslands are found only near post mile 1.03 in an area of approximately 0.13 acre.

Coast live oak woodland is dominated by coast live oaks and is found throughout the Biological Study Area, totaling approximately 5.70 acres.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment have been refined. Currently there are approximately 6.26 acres of coast live oak woodland within the Biological Study Area.

California sycamore woodland is a riparian community that borders several streams within the Biological Study Area. The California sycamore is the dominant tree but can be found intermixed with other trees. California sycamore woodland in the Biological Study Area totals about 1.11 acres.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment have been refined. Currently there are approximately 1.24 acres of California sycamore woodland within the Biological Study Area.

Willow woodland is a riparian community often found near water, with willow trees being the common dominant plant. Willow woodland occurs around post mile 21.57 in an area of approximately 0.57 acre.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment have been refined. Currently there are approximately 0.08 acre of willow woodland within the Biological Study Area.

Mulefat thickets occur near post mile 16.85 in an area of approximately 0.8 acre. At this location, mulefat is the dominate plant species and very few other plant varieties are found.

Coastal scrub areas are dominated by black sage or California buckwheat, but other brushes and scrubs can be found intermixed. Coastal scrub is found within the Biological Study Area, totaling approximately 8.92 acres.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment have been refined. Currently there are approximately 8.1 acres of coastal scrub within the Biological Study Area.

Chaparral areas are a commonly found upland community in the region. In the Biological Study Area, they are found on dry, steep slopes and their composition varies by location. Chaparral communities are found within the Biological Study Area and total approximately 17.53 acres.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment has been refined. Currently there are approximately 18.03 acres of chaparral within the Biological Study Area.

Streams/other waters are generally areas that are unvegetated bodies of water. Most of the streams/other waters found within the Biological Study Area are intermittent or seasonal and do not contain water all year. The streams/other waters communities are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Within the Biological Study Area are other waters, but no wetlands, subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction. Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction is equal to California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction, which encompasses rivers, streams, and lakes. A total of approximately 0.48 acre of potential U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional other waters of the United States and California Department of Fish and Wildlife streambed were identified within the Biological Study Area.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment has been refined. Currently there are approximately 0.54 acre of potential U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional other waters of the United States and California Department of Fish and Wildlife streambed identified within the Biological Study Area.

A total of approximately 0.06 acre of jurisdictional lakebed subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction was identified within the Biological Study Area. Approximately 2.42 acres of potential Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional riparian zones were identified within the Biological Study Area.

Ruderal areas are dominated by weedy species that are also often non-native. Ruderal areas are found in much of the Biological Study Area, concentrated along the paved edges of State Route 154 and are often regularly disturbed by roadway maintenance and vehicle traffic. Ruderal areas cover approximately 2.80 acres of the Biological Study Area.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the estimated affected environment has been refined. Currently there are approximately 2.75 acres of ruderal areas in the Biological Study Area.

Regional Habitats of Concern

Within the region are six documented regional habitats of concern that are considered sensitive: California sycamore woodlands, Southern California steelhead stream, southern coastal salt marsh, southern cottonwood willow riparian forest, southern vernal pool, and southern willow scrub. These six habitats of concern include federal and state sensitive habitats.

California sycamore woodlands are found within the Biological Study Area and are discussed further in this section. The remaining five habitats of concern are either not expected to be encountered within the Biological Study Area or are not expected to be disturbed by the project and are not discussed further in this document.

Migration and Travel Corridors

Three Biological Study Area locations—at post miles 22.0, 22.51 and 23.59—are mapped by the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project and are part of the Santa Ynez Mountain East natural landscape block. These three locations are also Ranked 5 in the Terrestrial Connectivity Areas of Conservation Emphasis, which means they are considered irreplaceable and

essential. Of these, the 66-inch reinforced concrete pipe culvert at post mile 22.0 may be accessible to wildlife that might attempt to move through a 588-foot-long culvert. Currently, the last 200 feet of this culvert is filled with sediment and debris. The other three culverts are not likely suitable for wildlife because they are either damaged or clogged, have a small opening ranging from 24 inches to 36 inches in diameter, or are as long as 780 linear feet.

Lake Cachuma and the Bradbury Dam are a complete fish passage barrier to all culvert locations upstream. Locations within the Biological Study Area that drain to the ocean on the Santa Barbara Coastal watershed were assessed as too steep and several also had the presence of natural complete barriers downstream. Therefore, the Biological Study Area does not provide suitable habitat for migrating southern California steelhead Distinct Population Segment.

Designated Critical Habitat

Critical habitat for the California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) is found at four Biological Study Area locations: post miles 21.57, 22.0, 22.51 and 23.59. These locations support aquatic breeding habitat, aquatic non-breeding habitat, upland habitat, and dispersal habitat for California red-legged frogs.

Critical habitat for Southern California steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) extends up to the downstream end of the culvert at post mile 27.67 in Maria Ygnacio Creek. However, a Fish Passage Habitat Assessment conducted for the location determined that the downstream gradient is too steep and the presence of a 25-foot bedrock waterfall downstream acts as a natural barrier, both of which suggest that the culvert at post mile 27.67 is not a potential location for Southern California steelhead trout critical habitat.

No federally designated critical habitat for federally listed plant species occurs within the Biological Study Area.

Invasive Species

A total of 53 invasive plant species were found in the project area and within the Biological Study Area. Seven of the invasive plant species are rated as “high,” 25 invasive plant species are rated as “moderate,” and 21 invasive plant species are rated “limited” by the California Invasive Plant Council Database invasiveness rating. The distribution of invasive plant species is scattered throughout the Biological Study Area and is most prevalent in ruderal and disturbed areas along the edges of State Route 154.

The following invasive plant species were found in the Biological Study Area: Australian saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*), slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*), wild oat (*Avena fatua*), false brome (*Brachypodium distachyon*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), red brome (*Bromus rubens*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), yellow star thistle

(*Centaurea solstitialis*), skeleton weed (*Chondrilla juncea*), bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*), cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster pannosus*), veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*), Medusa head (*Elymus caput-medusae*), coastal heron's bill (*Erodium cicutarium*), river gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulosa*), rattail fescue (*Festuca myuros*), Italian rye grass (*Festuca perennis*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), African daisy (*Gazania linearis*), French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), cutleaf geranium (*Geranium dissectum*), crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), wild mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum*), smooth cat's ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*), privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*), hyssop loosestrife (*Lythrum hyssopifolia*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), California bur clover (*Medicago polymorpha*), crystalline iceplant (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*), tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), Bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-caprae*), fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), Canary Island palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), pepper tree (*Schinus mole*), milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), London rocket (*Sisymbrium iño*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), smilo grass (*Stipa miliacea*), puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*), rose clover (*Trifolium hirtum*), and Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*).

Regional Plant Species of Concern

Within the project area are 30 documented special-status plant species, which include federal and state listed plants.

The following 11 federal and state listed special-status plant species are not expected to be found within the Biological Study Area due to lack of potential habitat and are not discussed further in this document: marsh sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*), Miles' milk-vetch (*Astragalus didymocarpus* var. *milesianus*), southern tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *australis*), salt marsh bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *maritimus*), seaside bird's-beak (*Cordylanthus rigidus* ssp. *littoralis*), Contra Costa goldfields (*Lasthenia conjugens*), Coulter's goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata* ssp. *coulteri*), pale-yellow layia (*Layia heterotricha*), Gambel's watercress (*Rorippa gambellii*), estuary seablite (*Suaeda esteroa*), and Sonoran maiden fern (*Thelypteris puberula* var. *sonorensis*).

The following 17 federal and state listed special-status plant species have potential habitat present within the Biological Study Area but were not detected during appropriately timed surveys. These special-status plant species are not expected to be affected by the project and are not discussed further in this document: Hoover's bent grass (*Agrostis hooveri*), Refugio manzanita (*Arctostaphylos refugioensis*), Coulter's saltbush (*Atriplex coulteri*), Davidson's saltscale (*Atriplex serenana* var. *davidsonii*), late-flowered mariposa-lily (*Calochortus fimbriatus*), Santa Barbara jewel flower (*Caulanthus amplexicaulis*).

var. barbarae), umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbracolorum*), Ojai fritillary (*Fritillaria ojaiensis*), mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata var. puberula*), Santa Lucia dwarf rush (*Juncus luciensis*), white-veined monardella (*Monardella hypoleuca ssp. hypoleuca*), southern curly-leaved monardella (*Monardella sinuata ssp. sinuata*), Mexican earthmoss (*Pleuridium mexicanum*), Hoffmann's bitter gooseberry (*Ribes amarum var. hoffmannii*), black-flowered figwort (*Scrophularia atrata*), chaparral ragwort (*Senecio aphanactis*), and Santa Ynez false lupine (*Thermopsis macrophylla*).

Two state listed special-status plants species have suitable habitat present within the Biological Study Area and were found during appropriately timed surveys: Santa Barbara honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata var. subspicata*) and Plummer's baccharis (*Baccharis plummerae ssp. plummerae*). Further discussion of these special-status plant species is found below.

Santa Barbara Honeysuckle and Plummer's Baccharis

Santa Barbara honeysuckle is described by the California Rare Plant Rank as a species of limited distribution and not very endangered in California.

Plummer's baccharis is described by the California Rare Plant Rank as a species that is considered fairly endangered in California. These two plant species are discussed together because typically they occur in the same chaparral and coastal scrub habitats within the same Biological Study Area locations. Santa Barbara honeysuckle occupies approximately 1.17 acres within the Biological Study Area. Plummer's baccharis occupies approximately 0.36 acre within the Biological Study Area.

Regional Animal Species of Concern

Within the project area are 40 documented special-status animal species, which include federal and state listed animals.

The following 18 federal and state listed special-status animal species are not expected to be encountered within the Biological Study Area due to lack of potential habitat and are not discussed further in this document: California tiger salamander (Santa Barbara County DPS) (*Ambystoma californiense* pop. 2), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), Belding's savanna sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*), California brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*), light-footed Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus levipes*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), California least tern (*Stemula antillarum browni*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*), arroyo chub (*Gilia orcuttii*), steelhead trout – Southern California DPS (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* pop. 10), vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*), and monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*).

The following six federal and state listed special-status animal species have potential habitat present within the Biological Study Area but were not detected during appropriately timed surveys: tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), and Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*). These special-status animal species are not expected to be affected by the project and are not discussed further in this document.

Sixteen federal and state listed special-status animal species have suitable habitat present within the Biological Study Area and were either seen during appropriately timed surveys or have the potential to be present during project construction: California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondi*), Coast Range newt (*Taricha torosa*), Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), coast patch-nosed snake (*Salvadora hexalepis virgultea*), two-striped gartersnake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), and western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*). Additional discussions of these special-status animal species are found below.

California Red-legged Frog

The California red-legged frog is federally threatened and considered a special species of concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This frog had historically ranged from Marin County southward to northern Baja California; presently, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties support the largest remaining populations. No protocol surveys were conducted for the California red-legged frog, and the species was not found during biological surveys. However, the Biological Study Area does contain suitable breeding and upland habitat for the frog. There are known occurrence records for the California red-legged frog in the vicinity of the Biological Study Area, so its presence is inferred.

Coast Range Newt, Western Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake

The following amphibian and reptile species have been addressed as a group because they have very similar habitat requirements, potential project-related impacts, and anticipated project measures.

The Coast Range newt is considered a California species of special concern. This newt is endemic to California and occurs from sea level to the coastal mountains from Mendocino County to San Diego County. No Coast Range

newts were found during biological surveys, but records indicate the species is present in the region, so its presence is inferred in the Biological Study Area.

The western pond turtle is considered a California species of special concern. Western pond turtles have been present in most Pacific slope drainages between Oregon and Mexico. The turtles live in well-vegetated ponds where water persists year-round. A western pond turtle was seen during biological surveys near post mile 16.85. Suitable breeding habitat is found within Lake Cachuma and in streams within the Biological Study Area.

The two-striped garter snake is considered a California species of special concern and occurs mainly along the Coast Range streams from Monterey south to Baja California. An extremely aquatic species, it uses water for both predation and escape from predators. Its habitat includes perennial and intermittent streams with rocky bottoms and bordered by dense vegetation. No two-striped garter snakes were found during biological surveys, but records indicate that the species is present in the region, so its presence is inferred in the Biological Study Area.

Northern California Legless Lizard, Coast Horned Lizard, Coast Patch-Nosed Snake, and Western Spadefoot Toad

The following amphibian and reptile species have been addressed as a group because they have similar habitat requirements, potential project-related impacts, and anticipated project measures.

The Northern California legless lizard is considered a California species of special concern. This species occurs in oak woodland, chaparral, riparian woodland, oak pine forest, and desert scrub. Most of the time, these lizards are found just beneath the surface, but they have also been found underground at depths of about 2 feet. No Northern California legless lizards were found during biological surveys, but suitable habitat for the species occurs within the Biological Study Area, so its presence is inferred. Northern California legless lizards could be found in loamy soil and leaf litter under coast live oak woodland.

The coast horned lizard is considered a California species of special concern. This species can be found in several habitat types ranging from gravelly sandy areas with scattered shrubs, clearings in riparian woodlands, dry uniform chaparral, and annual grasslands. Current populations of the species have severely declined in recent years due to habitat loss and the invasion of Argentine ants. No coast horned lizards were found during biological surveys, but suitable habitat for the species occurs within the Biological Study Area, so its presence is inferred. Coast horned lizards could be found in dry coastal scrubs and chaparral habitats.

The coast patch-nosed snake is considered a California species of special concern. It inhabits semi-arid and brushy areas and chaparral in canyons, rocky hillsides, and plains. No coast patch-nosed snakes were found during

biological surveys, but suitable habitat for the species occurs within the Biological Study Area, so its presence is inferred. Coast patch-nosed snakes could be found in dry coastal scrubs and chaparral habitats.

The western spadefoot toad is considered a California species of special concern. The species occurs throughout the Great Central Valley and associated foothills and through the south Coast Ranges into coastal Southern California. Populations have declined in recent years due to urban and agricultural development of its historically occupied habitat. No western spadefoot toads were found during biological surveys, but suitable habitat for the species occurs within the Biological Study Area, so its presence is inferred. The western spadefoot toad could be found in grassland areas where roadside puddles form during the wet season or where stock ponds are present in the vicinity.

San Diego Desert Woodrat

The San Diego desert woodrat is considered a California species of special concern. It occupies rock outcrops and cactus patches within coastal scrub, chaparral, and desert communities. San Diego desert woodrat nests were found at several locations within the Biological Study Area. Nests in dry coastal scrub habitat may be occupied by the San Diego desert woodrat.

American Badger

The American badger is considered a California species of special concern. Suitable habitat for badgers consists of herbaceous, shrub and other open habitats with dry, friable soils. This species digs burrows for its dens and is generally active during the night and day. Suitable habitat for the American badger exists within the Biological Study Area in open grassland habitat, mostly west of the Santa Ynez Mountain Range. It is unlikely that dens are found near culvert sites or near State Route 154. No potential dens were found within the Biological Study Area during biological surveys, but American badger presence in the region is inferred.

Grasshopper Sparrow, California Spotted Owl, and Other Nesting Birds

The grasshopper sparrow is considered a California species of special concern. The species typically breeds in central and southern coastal California in dense grasslands on rolling hills, in lowland plains, in valleys and on hillsides on lower mountain slopes. The species favors native grasslands with a mix of grasses, forbs and scattered shrubs and is loosely colonial when nesting. Although grasshopper sparrows were not found during biological surveys, suitable habitat is present in grasslands within the Biological Study Area and there is a record of occurrence about a quarter mile south of post mile 30.14.

The California spotted owl is considered a California species of special concern and is on the Sensitive Species list for the Los Padres National Forest. This owl species ranges from the Southern Cascade Range of

Northern California south along the west slope of the Sierra Nevada and in mountains of Central and Southern California nearly to the Mexican border. Although no California spotted owls were found during biological surveys, the Los Padres National Forest has several records of the species occurring near the Biological Study Area, with the nearest record about 1.6 miles southwest.

Other nesting birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code Section 3503. Numerous other nesting bird species protected by these two regulatory laws have the potential to nest in habitats found within the Biological Study Area. Potential nesting habitat for a variety of bird species occurs in grasslands, shrubs and trees found throughout the Biological Study Area.

Roosting Bats

Roosting bat species are discussed here as a group because they have similar habitat requirements, are impacted similarly by the project activities, and will require similar avoidance and minimization measures. Bats often select roosting sites that are within range of foraging areas. Bats also select roosting sites based on thermal characteristics, predation potential, noise, light levels, and other disturbance levels. Day roosts and maternity roosts are often regarded as the most important for bats. Suitable bat roosting habitat may be present around five culvert locations: post miles 16.85, 22.0, 25.7, 26.76, and 27.67. Although no bats were found during biological surveys, these culverts are of suitable size and have crevices that make them potential roosting sites. Suitable bat roosting habitat may also be present in large trees where cavities, hollows and snags are present.

Environmental Consequences

Natural Communities and Regional Habitats of Concern

The project will result in permanent and temporary impacts to the following natural communities found within the Biological Study Area: annual non-native grasslands, valley oak savanna, coast live oak woodland, California sycamore woodland, willow woodland, mulefat thickets, coastal scrub, chaparral, streams/other waters, and ruderal.

Permanent impacts will result from adding culvert features and installing new rock slope protection at some of the culvert sites, along with installing transportation management systems. Temporary impacts will result from temporary site disturbance associated with the construction process such as vegetation clearing, tree removal, equipment operation, staging sites, access routes, worker traffic, and temporary dewatering or water diversions. Prior to the start of construction activities, each work site will be delineated in the field to minimize the extent of construction disturbance and to protect adjacent natural communities.

Based on the project's anticipated permanent and temporary impacts to natural communities, only the California sycamore woodland community and streams/other waters are of particular interest and are discussed further in this document. The other natural communities are not expected to be significantly affected by the project, so no further considerations or specific measures are required.

Streams/Other Waters

Permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters will result from the installation of new culvert features in the water and new installation of rock slope protection at culvert locations that require it and where existing culvert features or rock slope protections are not already present. A total of approximately 0.007 acre of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional other waters of the United States and California Department of Fish and Wildlife streambed may be permanently impacted. A total of approximately 0.005 acre of Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional streambank and vegetated riparian habitat may be permanently impacted.

Temporary impacts to jurisdictional features will occur due to activities associated with site construction. A total of approximately 0.47 acre of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional other waters of the United States and California Department of Fish and Wildlife streambed may be temporarily impacted. A total of approximately 2.33 acres of Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional vegetated riparian habitat may be temporarily impacted.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, temporary impacts to jurisdictional features have been updated. Currently, a total of approximately 0.44 acre of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional other waters of the United States and California Department of Fish and Wildlife streambed have the potential to be temporarily impacted. Currently, a total of approximately 1.95 acres of Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional vegetated riparian habitat have the potential to be temporarily impacted.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the Project Development Team identified the potential to implement night work at suitable culvert locations. However, night work will not be implemented at culverts associated with waters designated as federal or state jurisdictional areas.

California Sycamore Woodland

The California sycamore woodland community is considered one of the state's rarer natural communities. It can be found in the riparian zone bordering stream channels within the project site at post mile 25.7 and post mile 27.67. It

is anticipated that the project will result in approximately 0.97 acre of temporary impacts to California sycamore woodland community. Temporary disturbances will likely be the result of temporary construction activities in and around the stream channel. The project is not anticipated to result in any permanent impacts to a California sycamore woodland community.

Migration and Travel Corridors

It is anticipated that construction activities will temporarily deter or disturb wildlife connectivity around the culvert sites. However, as a result of improvements made to the culverts, it is also anticipated that wildlife connectivity at the culvert locations will improve. No specific measures are recommended for migration or travel corridors.

Designated Critical Habitat

The project is anticipated to result in approximately 0.03 acre of permanent impacts and approximately 30.12 acres of temporary impacts to California red-legged frog critical habitat within the Biological Study Area.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, temporary impacts to designated critical habitat have been updated. Currently, the project is anticipated to result in approximately 21.02 acres of temporary impacts to California red-legged frog critical habitat within the Biological Study Area.

The anticipated potential impacts to California red-legged frog critical habitat as a result of the project are expected to be minimal when compared to the existing 145,121 acres of potential California red-legged frog critical habitat found in the surrounding region. All California red-legged frog critical habitat affected by the project will be restored or mitigated. Therefore, the determination of effect under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act is that the project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect designated critical habitat for California red-legged frogs.

Invasive Species

Ground disturbance and general construction activities have the potential to spread or introduce invasive plant species to the project area. The project has the potential to result in the increase of invasive plant species in the surrounding communities and areas that are not already dominated by invasive plant species. However, the project also proposes an opportunity to reduce the abundance and spread of invasive plant species through restoration plantings, along with avoidance and minimization measures.

Regional Plant Species of Concern

Of the federally listed plant species for the region, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project will have no effect on the marsh sandwort, salt marsh bird's-beak, Contra costa goldfields

or Gambel's watercress. No federally designated habitat for federally listed plant species occurs within the Biological Study Area.

Santa Barbara Honeysuckle and Plummer's Baccharis

Project construction activities are anticipated to result in temporary impacts to the Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer's baccharis. No permanent impacts to these special-status plant species are expected. Both species are numerous where they occur within the State Route 154 corridor, and the project is not expected to affect the status of the species.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures to protect the Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer's baccharis.

Regional Animal Species of Concern

Of the federally listed animal species for the region, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project will have no effect on the Southern California steelhead trout, tidewater goby, vernal pool fairy shrimp, monarch butterfly, California tiger salamander, California condor, California least tern, light-footed clapper rail, marbled murrelet, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, or western snowy plover. There will be no impacts to federally designated critical habitat for any of these federally listed animal species.

California Red-Legged Frog

Project-related activities that are associated with the construction, repair or maintenance of culverts have the potential to result in the death of individual California red-legged frogs that may be present at the work site. The potential to impact the California red-legged frog is especially likely at work sites where water is present. The potential need to capture and relocate California red-legged frogs from work sites would subject the animals to stresses that could also result in adverse effects, injury, or death.

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effect determination is that the project may affect and is likely to adversely affect the California red-legged frog. The basis for this determination is that the presence of California red-legged frogs is inferred, and there will be the potential for take of the species as a result of culvert-related work.

The project will incorporate avoidance and minimizations measures specific to the California red-legged frog and will fully mitigate for impacts by mitigation of jurisdictional features and by restoring all upland habitats within the Biological Study Area that have been disturbed by project construction.

Coast Range Newt, Western Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake

Potential project-related impacts to the Coast Range newt, western pond turtle and two-striped garter snake are the same as the potential project-

related impacts to the California red-legged frog because these species are often found in the same aquatic habitat.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures that are applicable to the Coast Range newt, western pond turtle and two-striped garter snake.

Northern California Legless Lizard, Coast Horned Lizard, Coast Patch-Nosed Snake, and Western Spadefoot Toad

Potential impacts to these reptile and amphibian species (Northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, coast patch-nosed snake, and western spadefoot toad) could occur during ground-disturbing activities, such as vegetation removal, grading, excavations, and tree removal, if the work occurs in their respective suitable habitats and if the species are present when the work is conducted.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures that are applicable to the Northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, coast patch-nosed snake and western spadefoot toad.

San Diego Desert Woodrat

If nests are discovered in suitable coastal scrub habitat during project construction, vegetation removal and site preparations could destroy the nest and potentially result in the death of any San Diego desert woodrat present.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures applicable to San Diego desert woodrats.

American Badger

If the American badger is present during construction, the species could be directly impacted by construction activities. The species could be entombed during grading or excavating activities, or otherwise get injured by construction equipment. Noise, light, and other disturbances associated with construction activities could negatively affect foraging and dispersal behaviors if the species is present during construction.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures applicable to American badgers.

Grasshopper Sparrow, California Spotted Owl, and Other Nesting Birds

Although no active nests were observed during biological surveys, potential nesting behaviors were observed. Nesting habitat for a variety of bird species occurs throughout the Biological Study Area. Direct impacts to nesting birds could result if vegetation or tree removal occurs during the nesting season. These direct effects could result in the injury or death of nesting birds or harassment that could alter nesting behaviors.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures to protect nesting birds.

Roosting Bats

Construction activities at culverts may temporarily displace bats if the culverts were being used as roosting sites. Trees with cavities, hollows and snags that provide potential roosting sites for bats could be lost if these trees are removed for project construction.

The project will incorporate appropriate avoidance and minimization measures to protect roosting bats.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Natural Communities and Regional Habitats of Concern

The following avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures will be implemented for the project to reduce potential impacts to natural communities and regional habitats of concerns.

NC 1: Prior to construction, Caltrans will obtain a Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. All permit terms and conditions will be incorporated into construction plans and implemented.

NC 2: Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed around jurisdictional features and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined environmentally sensitive areas will be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

NC 3: Construction activities in jurisdictional waters and temporary stream diversion, if needed, will be timed to occur between June 1 and October 31 in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies, when the surface water is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will be made only with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.

NC 4: During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and cleanup materials will be kept by the contractor onsite at all times during construction.

NC 5: During construction, erosion control measures will be implemented. Appropriate fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers will be installed as needed between the project site and jurisdictional other waters and riparian habitat. At

a minimum, erosion controls will be maintained by the contractor on a daily basis throughout the construction period.

NC 6: During construction, the staging areas will conform to Best Management Practices. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles will be checked and maintained by the contractor on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills.

NC 7: Stream contours will be restored as close as possible to their original condition.

The following mitigation measure will be implemented for the project to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant impacts under CEQA for natural communities and habitats of concern.

NC 8: Compensatory mitigation will be included as part of the project for natural communities and regional habitats of concern impacted by the project. Compensatory mitigation will be at a ratio of 1 to 1 (acreage) for temporary impacts and at a ratio of 3 to 1 (acreage) for permanent impacts.

Replacement plantings will include appropriate native plant species, appropriate plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success. Replacement plantings strategy will be detailed in the Caltrans Landscape Planting Plan and Caltrans Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will include details for mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared after the project has been approved and a full set of construction plans have been prepared, and will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Designated Critical Habitat

The avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures described for Natural Communities and Regional Habitats of Concern will also be applicable to designated critical habitat for the California red-legged frog. Additional measures are included to further reduce potential impacts to California red-legged frog designated critical habitat.

CH 1: Habitat elements that need to be removed during construction (such as trees, snags, boulders, rocks, downed trees, or logs) will be salvaged and replaced onsite, as much as feasible.

The following mitigation measure will be implemented for the project to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant impacts under CEQA for California red-legged frog designated critical habitat.

CH 2: The project will revegetate uplands, replacing trees at a ratio of at least 3 to 1, and seeding ground disturbance areas with native grasses and forbs.

Invasive Species

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts associated with invasive species.

INV 1: During construction, Caltrans will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

INV 2: Only clean fill will be imported. When practicable, invasive exotic plants in the project site will be removed and properly disposed of. Any plant species rated as “High” on the Cal-IPC Invasive Plant Inventory that are removed from the construction site will be taken to a landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. Inclusion of any species that occurs on the Cal-IPC Invasive Plant Inventory in the Caltrans erosion control seed mix or landscaping plans for the project will be avoided.

INV 3: Construction equipment will be inspected to verify it is clean and weed-free by Caltrans before entering the construction site. If necessary, wash stations onsite will be established for construction equipment under the guidance of Caltrans to avoid/minimize the spread of invasive plants and/or seed within the construction area. If wash stations onsite are infeasible due to the site’s space constraints, construction equipment will be cleaned offsite and then driven only on paved roads to the site.

Regional Plant Species of Concern

Santa Barbara Honeysuckle and Plummer’s Baccharis

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to special-status plant species and are applicable for the Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer’s baccharis.

SPS 1: Access to the construction areas will be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the work.

SPS 2: An environmentally sensitive area will be established onsite and maintained in areas where these special-status plant species occur.

SPS 3: In areas where impacts cannot be avoided, the contractor must first consider cutting vegetation only to ground level and avoid grubbing. This will allow the Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer’s baccharis to easily re-establish after construction. If grading or grubbing is required, seeds and topsoil free of noxious weeds will be collected and used for re-seeding the temporarily disturbed areas where these species occur.

Regional Animal Species of Concern

California Red-Legged Frog

The project qualifies for Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved under the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Aid Program. The following measures are the applicable measures from the Programmatic Biological Opinion that will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to the California red-legged frog.

RLF 1: Only a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs. Biologists authorized under this Programmatic Biological Opinion do not need to re-submit their qualifications for subsequent projects conducted pursuant to this Programmatic Biological Opinion unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revoked their approval at any time during the life of this Programmatic Biological Opinion.

RLF 2: Ground disturbance will not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work, unless the individual(s) has/have been approved previously and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has not revoked that approval.

RLF 3: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall survey the project site no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If found, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall relocate the California red-legged frog the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and that will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The relocation site shall be in the same drainage to the extent practicable.

RLF 4: Before any activities begin on a project, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished.

RLF 5: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall be present at the project site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and initial disturbance of habitat has been completed. If work is stopped because California red-legged frogs will be affected in a manner not anticipated by Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during review of the proposed action, the Resident Engineer will be notified immediately. When work is stopped, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall be notified as soon as possible.

RLF 6: During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers shall be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of at the end of each work week. Following construction, all trash and debris shall be removed from work areas.

RLF 7: All refueling, maintenance and staging of non-stationary equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from where a spill could drain directly toward aquatic habitat. If stationary equipment must be refueled within 60 feet of riparian habitat or water bodies, secondary containment Best Management Practices shall be implemented. The Caltrans biologist shall ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the onset of work, Caltrans shall ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

RLF 8: Habitat contours shall be returned to a natural configuration at the end of the project activities. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with culvert repair/replacement and drainage improvements, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible, or modification of original contours will benefit the California red-legged frog.

RLF 9: The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction, and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.

RLF 10: Caltrans shall attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog will be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding will be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May).

RLF 11: To control sedimentation during and after project completion, Caltrans shall implement Best Management Practices outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act received for the project.

RLF 12: If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction

activities, any diversions or barriers to flow shall be removed in a manner that will allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed shall be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material shall be removed from the streambed upon completion of the project.

RLF 13: Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water shall not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

RLF 14: Project sites shall be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials shall be used to the extent practicable. Invasive, exotic plants shall be controlled to the maximum extent practicable.

RLF 15: Caltrans shall not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive, exotic plants.

RLF 16: Upon completion of the project, Caltrans shall ensure that a Project Completion Report is completed and provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, following the template provided with the Programmatic Biological Opinion.

Coast Range Newt, Western Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake

The measures included for California red-legged frogs are also applicable to reduce potential impacts to the Coast Range newt, western pond turtle and two-striped garter snake. Additional measures are included to further reduce potential impacts to these species.

NTS 1: A Caltrans-approved biologist will survey the project site no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities in drainages for the Coast Range newt and western pond turtle. If found, the biologist shall relocate the species the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The relocation site will be in the same drainage to the extent practicable.

NTS 2: Before any project activities begin, a Caltrans-approved biologist will conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training will include a description of the Coast Range newt and western pond turtle and their habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve these species for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished.

Northern California Legless Lizard, Coast Horned Lizard, Coast Patch-Nosed Snake, and Western Spadefoot Toad

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the coast horned lizard, coast patch-nosed snake and western spadefoot toad to reduce potential impacts to these species.

LST 1: Prior to construction, a qualified biologist will survey the area of potential effect and, if present, capture and relocate any western spadefoot toads, coast horned lizards, coast patch-nosed snakes to the nearest suitable habitat outside of the area of potential effect. Observations of Species of Special Concern or other special-status species will be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion.

LST 2: The project plans will delineate environmentally sensitive areas to minimize impacts to sensitive areas and species by limiting access to the minimum required for construction within the area of potential effect. No vehicle access within the environmentally sensitive areas will be permitted.

LST 3: Prior to construction, Caltrans will acquire a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. and will incorporate any additional measures relating to these species not otherwise addressed in the Natural Environment Study.

The following additional avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the Northern California legless lizard:

CLL 1: A qualified biologist will conduct preconstruction surveys for legless lizards no more than 48 hours before initial ground disturbance proposed within coast live oak woodlands and/or prior to tree removal. Where feasible, this survey will include systematic subsurface searching (raking suitable habitat) because legless lizards are fossorial.

CLL 2: If any legless lizards are discovered during preconstruction surveys, they will be relocated to a nearby area with suitable habitat similar to where they were discovered. Also, if legless lizards are discovered during preconstruction surveys, a qualified biologist will be present during oak tree removal to safely relocate any legless lizards that could be uncovered during tree removal.

San Diego Desert Woodrat

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the San Diego desert woodrat to reduce potential impacts to the species.

WR 1: Prior to implementation of proposed project activities, a preconstruction visual survey will be conducted within suitable San Diego desert woodrat habitat in the area of potential effect to determine the presence or absence of woodrat nests.

WR 2: If woodrat nests are located during this survey, avoid them, and establish an environmentally sensitive area with a 25-foot buffer around each to the extent feasible.

WR 3: To the extent feasible, project activities requiring grading or vegetation removal within the 25-foot protective buffer should occur only during the non-breeding season (October 1 to December 31) to avoid noise impacts to any breeding woodrats that may occupy the nest from January through September.

WR 4: If project activities cannot avoid impacting or removing the nest, then it should be dismantled by hand prior to grading or vegetation removal activities. The dismantling will occur during the non-breeding season (October 1 to December 31) and will be conducted so that the nest material is removed starting on the side where most impacts will occur and ending on the side where the most habitat will be undisturbed, which will allow for any woodrats in the nest to escape into adjacent undisturbed habitat.

WR 5: If young are encountered during nest dismantling, the dismantling activity should be stopped and the material replaced back on the nest and the nest should be left alone and rechecked in 2 to 3 weeks to see if the young are out of the nest or capable of being out on their own (as determined by a qualified biologist); once the young can fend for themselves, the nest dismantling can continue.

WR 6: Prior to construction, Caltrans will acquire a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. and will incorporate any additional measures relating to this species not otherwise addressed in the Natural Environment Study.

American Badger

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the American badger to reduce potential impacts to the species.

AMB 1: No less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities, a qualified biologist will conduct a survey to determine if any American badger dens are present at the project site. The status of all dens should be determined and mapped. Known dens, if found occurring within the footprint of the activity, will be monitored for 3 days with tracking medium and/or camera traps to determine the current use. If no American badger activity is observed during this period, the den will be destroyed immediately to preclude subsequent use. If American badger activity is observed at the den during this period, the den will be monitored for at least 5 consecutive days from the time of the observation to allow any resident animal to move to another den during its normal activity. Only when the den is determined to be unoccupied will the den be excavated under the direction of the biologist. No disturbance of active dens will take place when cubs may be present and dependent on parental care.

AMB 2: Any observations of occupied badger dens or American badgers within the project area will be reported to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife by the project biologist.

AMB 3: No rodent control pesticides will be used, including anticoagulant rodenticides such as brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, and difenacoum. This is necessary to minimize the possibility of primary or secondary poisoning of an American badger or other special-status species.

Grasshopper Sparrow, California Spotted Owl, and Other Nesting Birds

The following measures apply to all birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code and are applicable to reduce potential impacts to the grasshopper sparrow and California spotted owl.

BRD 1: Prior to construction, vegetation removal will be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical nesting bird season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 1), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans no more than 10 calendar days prior to construction. If an active nest is found, Caltrans will implement an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be implemented until a qualified biologist has determined that juveniles have fledged or nesting activity has otherwise ceased.

BRD 2: During construction, active bird nests will not be disturbed and eggs or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code will not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time.

BRD 3: Trees to be removed will be noted on design plans. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed around the dripline of trees to be protected within project limits.

BRD 4: All clearing/grubbing and vegetation removal will be monitored and documented by the biological monitor(s) regardless of time of year.

BRD 5: If an active nest for the California spotted owl is observed within 100 feet of the area of potential effect, all project activities will immediately cease while Caltrans coordinates with applicable regulatory agencies and determines if additional measures are necessary.

Roosting Bats

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to roosting bats.

BAT 1: Tree removal will be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical bat maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid

potential impacts to roosting bats. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the bat maternity roosting season (February 1 to September 1), a bat roost survey will be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will also identify the nature of the bat use (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. If an active day roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist will determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that roosting activity has ceased or exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BAT 2: Prior to any culvert construction activities at post miles 16.85, 22.0, 25.70, 26.76, and 27.67, a preconstruction survey for roosting bats will be conducted by a biologist determined to be qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will identify the nature of the bat use (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. The qualified biologist will provide oversight on exclusion methods and installation and will determine whether exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BAT 3: If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts will not be disturbed or destroyed until pups are volant (capable of flight). In areas where an occupied roost can be avoided, readily visible exclusion zones will be established using environmentally sensitive area fencing. The size/radius of the exclusion zone(s) will be determined by a qualified biologist.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the updated Cultural Resources Screened Undertaking Memo dated, January 24, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

The project will not affect or impact any cultural resources as project impacts are limited to areas that have been previously disturbed and are outside of any known cultural resource boundaries.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources |
|---|---|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | No Impact |

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources |
|--|---|
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | No Impact |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries? | No Impact |

2.1.6 Energy

Caltrans incorporates energy efficiency, conservation and climate change measures into transportation planning, project development, design, operations, maintenance of transportation facilities, fleets, equipment, and buildings to minimize the use of fuel supplies and energy resources as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The project will not alter existing vehicle capacity or the existing alignment on State Route 154 and therefore will not alter existing energy use on the State Highway System. Some energy use will be required for project construction, but will be minimized whenever possible through the implementation of greenhouse gas reduction strategies during project construction. The relatively small amount of energy that will be used on project construction is anticipated to help reduce future energy use by minimizing the frequency of preventive and scheduled maintenance operations.

The project will not alter or conflict with existing local, regional, or state plans for energy management.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy |
|--|---|
| a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation? | No Impact |
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | No Impact |

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Addendum to the District Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated April 4, 2022, and in the updated Paleontology

Memo dated January 5, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils |
|---|--|
| a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | No Impact |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | No Impact |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | No Impact |
| iv) Landslides? | No Impact |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| 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 offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? | No Impact |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property? | No Impact |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? | No Impact |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | No Impact |

Affected Environment

State Route 154 lies within the seismically active northern Santa Barbara County area of California. The project is susceptible to seismic activities or events that can cause slope instabilities, landslides, soil slips and ground

shifts. The landscape around State Route 154 is a mix of vegetated rolling hills and mountain ranges with valleys, ravines, and steep ridgelines.

Environmental Consequences

Project activities will occur mostly on existing engineered highway structures on State Route 154. Construction activities associated with the project are anticipated to be small in scale and limited to specific locations along State Route 154. The project will be designed with considerations to the existing geologic conditions and risks to reduce the potential of altering existing geologic conditions or risks.

None of the project's work locations are situated within a recognized Earthquake Fault Zone as identified by the California Geological Survey or situated within 1,000 feet of a mapped fault that is considered active. The project is not anticipated to have the potential to directly or indirectly alter the risk of seismic activities in the region. The project is not anticipated to have the potential to directly or indirectly alter existing stability conditions that could alter the risk of landslides or other soil instabilities. The project will not disturb geologic rock units that have a high paleontological potential rating because project earthwork will be limited to areas that have been previously disturbed.

No subsurface investigation will be necessary for culvert replacement that can be conducted with the cut-and-cover method. If the project proposes different methods for culvert replacement (i.e., jack-and-bore), the project may require subsurface investigations at culvert locations to determine specific geological conditions and suitability. The project will require vegetation removal and grading to construct temporary access routes for some of the culvert locations. Additional evaluation will occur for any proposed grading once locations and alignments are finalized. Earthwork activities required for the project will disturb existing soils and have the potential to temporarily alter erosion conditions at construction sites.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project will implement the following measure to reduce potential impacts associated with soil erosions.

GEO 1: The project will include a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and Best Management Practices as part of Caltrans Standard Measures to address specific sediment and erosion controls during project construction. The project will install appropriate sediment and erosion control barriers at active construction sites, and they will be maintained until construction activities are completed at those sites.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the updated Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, Noise and Water Quality Technical Assessment Memo dated February 13, 2023, and the updated Climate Change Technical Report dated February 14, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions |
|--|---|
| a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | Less Than Significant Impact |

Affected Environment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for documenting greenhouse gas emissions nationwide; the California Air Resources Board does so for the state.

The project area is part of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan identifies plans and strategies to increase alternative forms of travel such as biking, walking, and public transportation to help meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals as well as improve public accessibility, safety, and health.

State Route 154 provides one lane of travel in each direction, with occasional passing lanes, turn pockets and pullouts. The route crosses the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Ynez Mountains, connecting the community of Los Olivos with the city of Santa Barbara, and provides travelers an alternative route to U.S. Route 101 between those cities. Traffic patterns on State Route 154 consist of mostly commuter traffic traveling between homes in the Santa Ynez Valley and jobs on the Santa Barbara coast.

Population density around State Route 154 is considered relatively low, with small communities and homes spread out around the highway. State Route 154 provides the main access route for many of these small communities and homes in the Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Ynez Mountains region. The areas around State Route 154 are mostly residential and agricultural with some commercial business and recreational facilities. Much of the area around State Route 154 is unincorporated. The southern portion of State Route 154 crosses the Los Padres National Forest and provides access to Lake Cachuma.

Environmental Consequences

The purpose of the project is to restore the conditions of existing culvert features along State Route 154. The project will not alter the existing vehicle capacity or alter the existing vehicle miles traveled on State Route 154. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to alter existing operational greenhouse gas emissions for the region. The project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

The total of estimated greenhouse gas emissions for project construction is about 311 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions over a period of approximately 250 working days. This estimate is based on assumptions made during the environmental planning phase of the project and is considered a “ballpark” estimate of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions, based on limited data inputs and default modeling values for a stormwater and drainage project.

While the project will result in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of construction activities, it is anticipated that the project will not have any effect on operational greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, the following project features will also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by the project:

- *Transportation Management Plan:* The plan will keep the traveling public and visitors to local recreational facilities informed about the construction schedule and anticipated traffic delays, the dates and duration of any temporary closures on State Route 154, and other pertinent travel information, to minimize unnecessary delays and emissions.
- *Staged Construction:* The project has been designed to limit the length of lane closures to minimize delays to travelers and adopt appropriate construction schedules to minimize construction mobilization efforts, which will help reduce construction emissions.
- *Vegetation Replanting:* The project will replant vegetation after project construction is completed. Vegetation replanting will help sequester carbon.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The potential for greenhouse gas impacts generated by project construction activities will be reduced with the implementation of the following minimization measures.

GHG 1: All construction activities will comply with all district rules, regulations and ordinances, and statutes of the California Air Resources Board to reduce and minimize construction greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., restrictions on idling equipment, properly maintained equipment, and appropriate point sources for materials, etc.).

GHG 2: All applicable Caltrans standard measures and strategies for emissions reductions will be implemented to reduce construction-generated greenhouse gas emissions. Additional Caltrans strategies and techniques for the reduction of construction emissions will be implemented where feasible and appropriate.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the updated Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment Memo, dated December 30, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
|---|--|
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | No Impact |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | Less Than Significant Impact |

Affected Environment

Hazardous Materials

Based on the California Department of Toxic Substances Control - Hazardous Waste and Substance Site List online database, there are no known hazardous waste issues or hazardous materials sites pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 within the project limits.

Airports

Two project construction sites are within 2 miles of the Santa Ynez Airport, which is classified as a general aviation airport.

Emergency Response and Evacuations

Based on the County of Santa Barbara's Emergency Management Plan 2013, State Route 154 is identified as one of three main transportation corridors for the region.

Wildland Fires

State Route 154 crosses the Santa Ynez Valley and the Santa Ynez Mountains. All project construction locations are near vegetated areas that are susceptible to wildland fires.

Environmental Consequences

Hazardous Materials

The project is not anticipated to encounter or use quantities of hazardous waste materials that could create substantial or considerable hazards to the public or environment. However, project construction activities have the potential to generate treated wood waste from replacement of guardrails, which is considered hazardous waste.

Airports

Based on the Draft Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Santa Ynez Airport 2019, the two project construction sites are outside of the Airport Property Boundary and Noise Exposure Range. Therefore, the two construction sites will not expose workers to safety hazards or excessive noise associated with the nearby airport.

Emergency Response and Evacuations

It is anticipated that temporary construction activities on State Route 154 have the potential to temporarily impede emergency responses or emergency evacuations reliant on access to State Route 154. However, the project will maintain regular and emergency access on State Route 154 during construction. Temporary construction activities are not anticipated to considerably affect existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plans in the region.

Wildland Fires

Construction activities have the potential to unintentionally ignite nearby vegetation. However, the project will incorporate precautions to prevent fire-related incidents during construction as part of the code of safety practices in accordance with the California Division of Safety and Health – Fire Protection and Prevention Guidance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Hazardous Materials

The following measure will be implemented for potentially hazardous waste materials.

HAZ 1: Treated wood waste and any other hazardous waste issues common to highway construction projects will be appropriately handled, transported, and disposed of in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications. If required, more detailed hazardous waste investigations will be conducted prior to project construction to confirm the presence or absence of any pre-existing potentially hazardous waste materials.

Emergency Response and Evacuations

The following minimization measure will be implemented for Emergency Response and Evacuations.

HAZ 2: The project will include Caltrans Standard Measures and Caltrans Standard Specifications related to unanticipated emergency events to accommodate emergency responses or emergency evacuations when needed. In addition, the project will coordinate with local and regional emergency responders prior to and during construction.

Wildland Fires

The following minimization measure will be implemented for potential wildland fire.

HAZ 3: The project will include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to fire prevention and fire safety to minimize the potential of igniting nearby vegetation during construction activities, along with implementing the California Division of Safety and Health – Fire Protection and Prevention Guidance.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the updated Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, Noise and Water Quality Technical Assessment Memo dated February 13, 2023, the Location Hydraulic Study dated July 28, 2021, and the Location Hydraulic Study Addendum dated January 11, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality |
|---|--|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality? | No Impact |
| b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? | No Impact |
| 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 onsite or offsite; | No Impact |
| (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite; | No Impact |
| (iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or | No Impact |
| (iv) impede or redirect flood flows? | No Impact |
| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | No Impact |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | No Impact |

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Project activities will occur mostly in the existing Caltrans right-of-way and on existing easements on State Route 154. For culvert-related work, the project will require temporary construction easements and may require additional drainage easements, though those will not alter existing land use or planning in the region. Project activities will not divide any existing communities and is not anticipated to conflict with any existing land use plan, policy, or regulations in the region.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning |
|--|--|
| a) Physically divide an established community? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Project activities will involve work on highway features that are located on the existing roadway of State Route 154. The project will have no involvement in the removal or extraction of mineral resources.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources |
|--|--|
| 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? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the updated Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, Noise and Water Quality Technical Assessment Memo dated February 13, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

| Question—Would the project result in: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise |
|---|--|
| 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? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |

Affected Environment

The landscape around State Route 154 is mostly rural, having a relatively low population density, with dispersed homes, businesses, and recreational facilities. There is a low concentration of homes, businesses or recreational facilities next to State Route 154.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not permanently alter existing local ambient noise levels because the project will not alter the capacity or alignment of State Route 154. It is anticipated that construction activities will generate noises that could temporarily increase ambient noise levels near the construction site. The increase in noise levels as a result of construction is not considered substantial because construction activities will be temporary and intermittent.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the Project Development Team identified the potential to implement night work on the project. Night work will be implemented only at suitable culvert locations and generate construction noises between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Night work is anticipated to temporarily increase nighttime ambient noise-levels near the construction site. However, the increase in noise levels as a result of night work is not considered substantial because construction activities will be temporary and

intermittent. In addition, potential suitable culvert locations where night work could be implemented are not anticipated to be in proximity to sensitive receptors. The project will include Caltrans Standard Measures pertaining to nighttime noise control.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures

The project will implement the following minimization measure to reduce potential impacts associated with temporary construction-generated noise.

NOI 1: The project will include all Caltrans Standard Measures and strategies related to noise and vibration control to minimize noise-related disturbances caused by construction activities. Construction activities are not to exceed 86 decibel maximum sound levels at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

The project will not alter the existing capacity or alignment of State Route 154. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to conflict with any existing population or housing status in the region.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing |
|---|---|
| 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)? | No Impact |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | No Impact |

2.1.15 Public Services

Project activities will be limited to the existing alignment of State Route 154. The project will not be involved with any planned or existing governmental facilities and is not anticipated to have any effect on any planned or existing governmental facilities near the project. The project will maintain public access on State Route 154 during project construction, and access to any existing governmental facilities near project work locations will be maintained.

| Question: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services |
|---|--|
| a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection? | No Impact |
| Police protection? | No Impact |
| Schools? | No Impact |
| Parks? | No Impact |
| Other public facilities? | No Impact |

2.1.16 Recreation

The project is not anticipated to have any considerable effects to existing recreational patterns in the region. Project activities will occur on the existing State Highway System and will not involve the construction, removal or alteration of access points or routes used for recreation. In addition, the project will not remove, construct or expand recreational facilities.

The project will involve culvert work and pavement restoration work on the existing parking lot of a scenic vista at post mile 22.51. During construction the parking lot will be temporarily closed. Construction is expected to take 15 to 20 working days to complete over a period of about 2 to 3 weeks. The culvert and repaving work will not modify any of the existing characteristics of the scenic vista or any of the site’s recreational features.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation |
|--|---|
| a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | No Impact |

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation |
|---|---|
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | No Impact |

2.1.17 Transportation

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

Affected Environment

State Route 154 is a two-lane highway, with occasional passing lanes, turn pockets and pullouts, that crosses the Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Ynez Mountains. It is the main access route for the region, connecting the community of Los Olivos to the city of Santa Barbara. Traffic patterns on State Route 154 consist of mostly local commuter traffic and visitors to the region.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not alter the existing alignment or capacity of State Route 154 and will not conflict with any existing or planned transportation-related programs or facilities in the region. The project will not alter existing vehicle miles traveled on State Route 154. The existing traffic and emergency access on State Route 154 will not change as a result of the project.

Regular traffic and emergency access on State Route 154 will be maintained during construction. Temporary traffic control will be installed at locations where construction activities are occurring on the roadway to maintain access. The number and location of required temporary traffic controls on the project will be limited to what is necessary for project completion. Temporary

traffic control will be planned with consideration to existing traffic conditions and patterns on State Route 154.

Since the circulation of the draft Initial Study, the Project Development Team have decided to implement night work at suitable culvert locations. Night work will be implemented to help minimize temporary traffic disruptions during the day and is expected to occur between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The duration of night work at each culvert location will depend on site conditions. Temporary lane closures implemented during night work will follow Caltrans traffic control standards and will be included in the project's construction details.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measure will be implemented to minimize potential impacts to transportation and travelers as a result of project construction.

TRS 1: The project will include Caltrans Standard Measures for temporary traffic control in addition to implementing the strategies found in the required Transportation Management Plan to ensure traffic and emergency access is maintained on State Route 154 during project construction. In addition, the project will coordinate with local and regional emergency responders prior to and during construction.

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the updated Cultural Resources Screened Undertaking Memo dated, January 24, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Consultation was initiated for the project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 and 21084.3(c)). Out of the eight Native American tribal groups contacted, none of the recipients requested further consultation for the project.

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, or 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:

| Question: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources |
|--|---|
| a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or | No Impact |
| b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | No Impact |

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

The project will work on existing culvert pipes along State Route 154. Culvert-related work focuses on repairing and improving existing conditions. The project will not install new culvert structures in a new location or relocate any existing culvert alignment.

The project will not change existing water supplies, wastewater treatments or drainage patterns in the region. The project will not change the existing functions of electrical, natural gas or telecommunications facilities in the region.

The project will not generate excessive amounts of solid wastes that will overwhelm capacities of existing waste management facilities. The project will recycle any recyclable waste materials generated from project construction. Waste materials generated by project construction will be collected and disposed of properly to meet all state and federal requirements.

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems |
|--|--|
| 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? | No Impact |
| b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |
| e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | No Impact |

2.1.20 Wildfire

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire |
|---|---|
| a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | Less Than Significant Impact |
| 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? | Less Than Significant Impact |

| Question—Would the project: | CEQA Significance Determinations for 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? | No Impact |
| 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? | No Impact |

Affected Environment

The southern portion of State Route 154 crosses the Santa Ynez Mountains and goes through the Los Padres National Forest. Based on the Cal Fire 2007 Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map, the portion of State Route 154 within the Los Padres National Forest is in an area classified as very high for fire hazards. Rural homes within the Santa Ynez Mountains are accessible mainly via State Route 154.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not change any planned or existing emergency response plans or emergency evacuation plans for the region because the project will not permanently alter access on State Route 154. The project will ensure that State Route 154 remains accessible for emergency response vehicles and for emergency evacuation plans during project construction.

The project will not exacerbate wildfire risk because the project will not permanently change existing wildfire conditions in the region. The project will not do any infrastructure work that will alter the existing fire risk in the region.

Some of the culvert locations are in very high fire hazard zones and in areas of heavy vegetation. The project will require construction workers to temporarily occupy areas that are classified as very high for fire hazards. Construction activities have the potential to unintentionally ignite nearby vegetation. During construction, vegetation removal will be required to allow for access of construction equipment and supplies to work locations. Although the risk of unintended fires is greater during the vegetation removal process, once the work locations are clear of vegetation, the risk for unintended fires would be reduced. The project will incorporate precautions to prevent fire-related incidents during construction as part of the code of safety practices in accordance with the California Division of Safety and Health – Fire Protection and Prevention Guidance. Any vegetation removal will be planned and

conducted using techniques and strategies that will avoid and minimize unintentional fires.

The project will not alter existing drainage patterns and will implement stormwater Best Management Practices as part of the Caltrans Standard Measures that will be carried out during project construction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The measures identified for Transportation (Section 2.1.17) will also be applicable for wildfire. The following additional minimization measure will be implemented for wildfire.

WF 1: The project will include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to fire prevention and fire safety in order to minimize the potential for unintentional fires during construction as well as implementing the California Division of Safety and Health – Fire Protection and Prevention Guidance.

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

| Question: | CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance |
|--|---|
| 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? | Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated |
| 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.) | Less Than Significant Impact |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | No Impact |

Affected Environment

Project work will occur at 18 locations on State Route 154 in Santa Barbara County. Project activities will occur inside and outside the existing highway footprint. Project activities occurring within the existing highway footprint are related to the installation of new traffic monitoring systems and pavement repair. Project activities occurring outside of the existing highway footprint are related to culvert improvement work.

Within the project area are several types of natural environments and communities that could support a variety of animal and plant species. Natural communities of interest in the project area include streams/other waters, California sycamore woodlands, and designated critical habitat for the California red-legged frog. Animal and plant species of interest in the project area include Santa Barbara honeysuckle, Plummer's baccharis, California red-legged frog, coast range newt, western pond turtle, two-striped garter snake, Northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, coast patch-nosed snake, western spadefoot toad, San Diego desert woodrat, American badger, grasshopper sparrow, California spotted owl, and other nesting birds.

Environmental Consequences

Because the aim of the project is to improve existing culvert features, traffic monitoring and pavements, the project will result in the overall improvement of human conditions. The project will include Caltrans standard measures for testing and monitoring to protect the general public from hazards that could arise from the project's construction activities. The project is not anticipated to generate hazards or expose the general public to hazards that could result in substantial adverse effects. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in considerable impacts to the general public.

Project activities occurring within the existing highway footprint will result in minimal impacts to the human environment. Permanent impacts will result from the installation of new traffic monitoring systems and new pavement. Temporary impacts will result from construction-related activities required to install the traffic monitoring systems and do the pavement repair. The project will include minimization measures to reduce visual noticeability of newly installed permanent features on the highway, and the project will include Caltrans standard measures to reduce impacts caused by construction-related activities. Therefore, the project will result in less than significant impacts to the human environment. With inclusion of the avoidance and minimization measures, the project will not result in considerable cumulative impacts to the human environment.

Project activities occurring outside of the existing highway footprint for culvert-related work could disturb natural environments along with any animal or plant species that may be present in those environments. Culvert-related work will have some permanent impacts on the natural environment as a

result of installation of new culvert features and rock slope protection at some of the culvert sites. Culvert-related work will create temporary impacts to the natural environment as a result of any required vegetation clearing, tree removal, equipment operation, staging sites, access routes, worker traffic and temporary dewatering or water diversions at each culvert site. Culvert-related work also could disturb and affect any animal species that may be present in or around the work site. The project will include measures to replace and replant vegetation removed as a result of the project and will monitor each project site during construction for species of interest to be protected. With implementation of the appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, the anticipated impacts to the natural environment will be less than significant. With the inclusion of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, the project will not result in considerable cumulative impacts to the natural environment.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The complete list of measures associated with this project can be found in Section 1.5, *Standard Measures Included in All Build Alternatives*, Section 2.1, *CEQA Environmental Checklist*, and in Appendix C, *Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary*.

The mitigation measures presented here are found in Section 2.1.4, *Biological Resources* and will be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Natural Communities and Regional Habitats of Concern

NC 8: Compensatory mitigation will be included as part of the project for natural communities and regional habitats of concern impacted by the project. Compensatory mitigation will be at a ratio of 1 to 1 (acreage) for temporary impacts and at a ratio of 3 to 1 (acreage) for permanent impacts. Replacement plantings will include appropriate native plant species, appropriate plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success. Replacement plantings strategy will be detailed in the Caltrans Landscape Planting Plan and Caltrans Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will include details for mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared after the project has been approved and a full set of construction plans are prepared, and will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Designated Critical Habitat

CH 2: The project will revegetate uplands, replacing trees at a ratio of at least 3 to 1, and seeding ground disturbance areas with native grasses and forbs.

Appendix A Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis required, potential impacts and avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements.

Agency consultation for this project has been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and so on. Public participation was sought through the release and review of the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration during the public comment period. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

Biological Resources Coordination

August 22, 2018: Bradley Collins (Caltrans Student Biology Assistant) submitted an online request through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Information, Planning and Conservation System* website for an official U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service species list for the project area. The official species list was received that day.

August 22, 2018: Bradley Collins submitted a formal request via email for a National Marine Fisheries Service-approved species list for the proposed project. The official species list was received that day.

November 16, 2021: Audrey Weichert (Caltrans Biologist) submitted an updated online request through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Information, Planning and Conservation System* website for an official U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service species list for the project area. The official species list was received that day.

November 16, 2021: Audrey Weichert submitted an updated formal request via email for a National Marine Fisheries Service-approved species list for the proposed project. The official species list was received that day.

June 15, 2022: The project obtained a Programmatic Biological Opinion for California red-legged frog from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Cultural Resources Coordination

February 22, 2021: Christina MacDonald (Caltrans Archaeologist) sent a request to the Native American Heritage Commission for a search of the Sacred Land Files and a list of Native Americans who are knowledgeable about the area and who want to be contacted regarding projects in the area.

March 8, 2021: Ms. Fonseca of the Native American Heritage Commission responded with positive results of the Sacred Lands Files search and a list of individuals and tribes to consult for the project. The same day, Christina MacDonald sent out letters electronically to the consultation group, initiating consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Assembly Bill 52. Also the same day, Julie Tumamait-Stenslie of the Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians responded that she would not consult on this project.

March 19, 2021: Christina MacDonald sent an email to Nakia Zavalla, Cultural Liaison for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, specifically asking for information and/or concerns from the tribe about one culvert near the U.S. Route 101/State Route 154 interchange and the large village site of Jonjonata.

April 13, 2021: Christina MacDonald called the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and asked for Ms. Zavalla and left a message and followed up with another email seeking her assistance with this project. No response has been received to date.

U.S. Forest Service (Los Padres National Forest) Coordination

January 27, 2021: Geramaldi (Caltrans Environmental Coordinator) sent an email with preliminary project mapping and information to Veronica Garza, the Lands and Special Uses Officer for the U.S. Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest, informing her of potential U.S. Forest Service properties affected by the project and requested any comments or concerns.

February 12, 2021: Veronica Garza responded and provided comments and feedback after reviewing preliminary project mapping and information. Veronica Garza provided a blank SF299 form and requested that the form be completed and submitted prior to October 1, 2021 for the project.

February 17, 2021: Geramaldi responded to comments made by Veronica Garza, provided additional project information, and asked for clarifications on completing the SF299 form.

May 17, 2021: Veronica Garza responded with clarifications and timing on the typical process for the SF299 form. Geramaldi provided information on the project timeline and when SF299 form would be submitted for the project.

June 4, 2021: Via a phone call, Geramaldi and Veronica Garza further discussed project status and plans for submission of the SF299 for the project.

June 14, 2021: Geramaldi sent an email to Veronica Garza explaining that the project would no longer permanently affect properties owned by the U.S. Forest Service, but the project will process and submit the SF299 form as required for anticipated temporary construction easements on U.S. Forest Service properties. No response has been received from Veronica Garza to date.

October 28, 2021: Sarah Parris, Caltrans District 5 Right of Way Agent, submitted the SF299 form via electronic mail to the U.S. Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest office with attention to Veronica Garza for review. No response has been received from either the U.S. Forest Service or Veronica Garza to date.

May 20, 2022: Geramaldi sent a copy of the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration via postal mail to the U.S Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest office with attention to Veronica Garza. No response has been received from either the U.S. Forest Service or Veronica Garza to date.

June 24, 2022: Geramaldi and Sarah Parris confirmed that the U.S. Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest office has not submitted any comments for the project. Geramaldi will submit a copy of the project's final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration to the U.S. Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest office as part of previous agreements discussed with Veronica Garza on June 4, 2021.

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Appendix B Comment Letters and Responses

The Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for public review and comment for 30 days between May 20, 2022 and June 17, 2022.

No public comments have been received for the project to date.

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Appendix C List of Preparers

This section lists the Caltrans staff responsible for the preparation and/or review of this document and/or supporting technical studies for this project.

Audrey Weichert, Associate Environmental Planner (Natural Sciences). B.S., Environmental Management and Protection, Minors in Biology and Land Rehabilitation, California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo; Certified Wildlife Biologist; over 10 years of environmental planning and biological sciences experience. Contribution: Natural Environment Study.

Christina MacDonald, Associate Environmental Planner (Archaeology). M.A., Cultural Resources Management, Sonoma State University; B.A., Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles; over 20 years of experience in California prehistoric and historical archaeology. Contribution: Principal Investigator – Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology.

Daniel Leckie, Associate Environmental Planner (Architectural History). M.S., Historic Preservation, The University of Vermont; B.A., History and Sociology, State University of New York at Stony Brook; over 8 years of experience in the fields of Architectural History and Historic Preservation Planning. Contribution: Principal Architectural Historian.

Geramaldi, Environmental Scientist (Coordinator). B.S., Environmental Geography, California Polytechnic State University - Pomona; over 6 years of environmental management and planning experience. Contribution: Initial Study, Climate Change Report.

Hunter Lawless, Civil Engineer. B.S., Environmental Engineering, California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo; over 3 years of environmental engineering experience. Contribution: Noise, Water and Air Quality Studies.

Joel Kloth, Engineering Geologist. B.S., Geology, California Lutheran University; over 30 years of experience in petroleum geology, geotechnical geology, and environmental engineering/geology-hazardous waste. Contribution: Hazardous Waste Studies and Paleontology Studies.

Kristen Langager, Landscape Architect. B.S., Landscape Architecture, California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo; over 15 years of Landscape Architecture experience. Contribution: Visual Impact Assessment.

Matthew Fowler, Senior Environmental Planner. B.A., Geography/Methods of Geographic Analysis, San Diego State University; over 20 years of environmental planning experience. Contribution: Initial Study, document review and approval.

Margaret “Meg” Perry, Associate Environmental Planner (Natural Sciences). B.S., Soil Science, California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo; over 10 years of experience in California biology and habitat studies, emphasizing botany, wetland science, permitting, and environmental compliance. Contribution: Natural Environment Study.

Mark Davis, Transportation Engineer – Civil. B.S., Civil Engineering, Santa Clara University; over 20 years of civil engineering experience. Contribution: Project Design, Preliminary Project Layouts.

Ruben Atilano, Environmental Engineer, M.S. Civil Engineering, California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo; 2 years of environmental engineering experience. Contribution: Noise, Water, Air Quality, and Hazardous Waste Studies.

Tom Davis, Transportation Engineer – Civil (Hydraulics). B.S., Civil Engineering, Bradley University; over 20 years of hydraulics experience with Caltrans. Contribution: Hydrology Analysis, Location Hydraulic Study.

Appendix D Distribution List

Caltrans District 5 Office at 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401 (Weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Santa Barbara Public Library, 40 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, California 93101 (Tuesday through Wednesday, and Friday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Goleta Valley Public Library, 500 North Fairview Avenue, Goleta, California 93117 (Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Solvang Public Library, 1745 Mission Drive, Solvang, California 93463 (Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Santa Barbara County – Department of Planning and Development
123 East Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, California 93101-2058

Santa Barbara County Parks – Cachuma Lake Recreation Area
2225 Highway 154, Santa Barbara, California 93105

California Highway Patrol – Santa Barbara Office (760)
6465 Calle Real, Goleta, California 93117-1535

U.S. Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest
Attention: Veronica Garza
3505 Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, California 93105

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Ventura Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90017

California Department of Fish and Wildlife – South Coast Region
3883 Ruffin Road, San Diego, California 92123

Regional Water Quality Control Board – Central Coast
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101, San Luis Obispo, California 93401

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Appendix E Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS-49 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
(916) 654-6130 | FAX (916) 653-5776 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov



September 2022

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 639-6392 or visit the following web page: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi>.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 879-6768 (TTY 711); or at Title.VI@dot.ca.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Tavares'.

TONY TAVARES
Director

"Provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment"

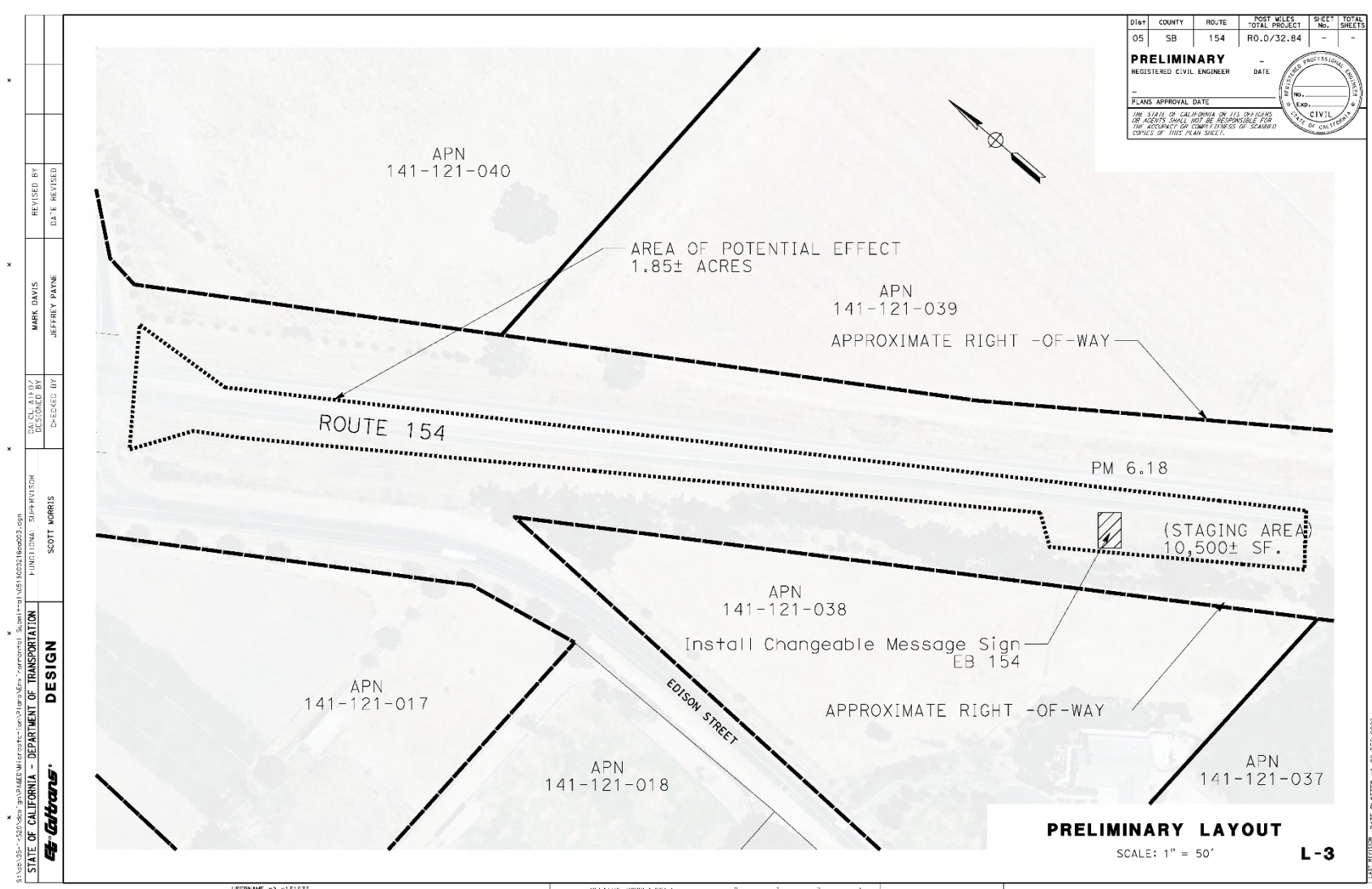
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Appendix F Preliminary Project Layouts

The preliminary project layouts in this appendix are presented for informational use only. Prior to project approval, the layouts are subject to change. If the project is approved, a more detailed set of project design plans will be finalized for use for project construction and permit coordination.

In the draft environmental document, preliminary layout 1 was absent. However, the count station at post mile 0.10 shown in preliminary layout 1 is no longer part of this project.

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| DIST | COUNTY | ROUTE | POST MILES TOTAL PROJECT | SHEET NO. | TOTAL SHEETS |
|------|--------|-------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 05 | SB | 154 | RO.0/32.84 | - | - |

PRELIMINARY
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER DATE

PLANS APPROVAL DATE

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OR ITS OFFICERS OR AGENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF DRAWING DIMENSIONS OF THIS PLAN SHEET.



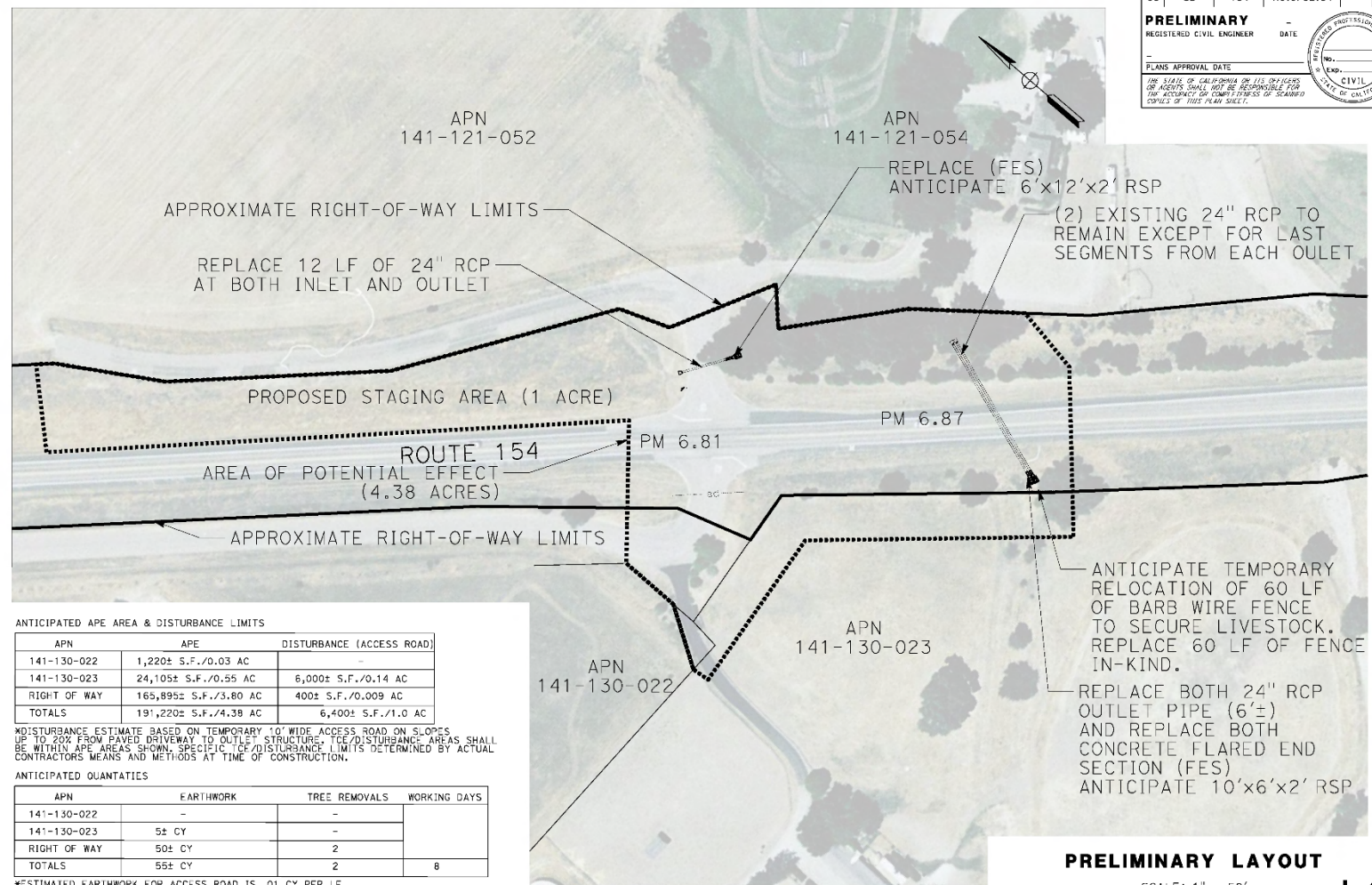
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|---------------|---------------|
| DESIGNED BY | MARK DAVIS |
| CHECKED BY | JEFFREY PAYNE |
| DESIGNED BY | SCOTT MORRIS |
| DESIGN | |

BORDER LAST REVISED 10/12/18 USERNAME => s151633 DGN FILE => 2518000018e0001.dgn PROJECT NUMBER & PHASE 0518000216

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DESIGN
 SCOTT MORRIS
 CHECKED BY
 MARK DAVIS
 JEFFREY PAYNE
 REVISIONS BY
 D.F.E. REVISED

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|------|--------|-------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| DIST | COUNTY | ROUTE | POST MILES TOTAL PROJECT | SHEET NO. | TOTAL SHEETS |
| 05 | SB | 154 | RO.0/32.84 | - | - |

PRELIMINARY
 REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER - DATE
 PLANS APPROVAL DATE
 THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OR ITS OFFICERS OR AGENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF DRAWING COPIES OF THIS PLAN SHEET.



ANTICIPATED APE AREA & DISTURBANCE LIMITS

| APN | APE | DISTURBANCE (ACCESS ROAD) |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 141-130-022 | 1,220± S.F./0.03 AC | - |
| 141-130-023 | 24,105± S.F./0.55 AC | 6,000± S.F./0.14 AC |
| RIGHT OF WAY | 165,895± S.F./3.80 AC | 400± S.F./0.009 AC |
| TOTALS | 191,220± S.F./4.38 AC | 6,400± S.F./1.0 AC |

*DISTURBANCE ESTIMATE BASED ON TEMPORARY 10' WIDE ACCESS ROAD ON SLOPES UP TO 20% FROM PAVED DRIVEWAY TO OUTLET STRUCTURE. THE DISTURBANCE AREAS SHALL BE WITHIN APE AREAS SHOWN. SPECIFIC TOE/DISTURBANCE LIMITS DETERMINED BY ACTUAL CONTRACTORS MEANS AND METHODS AT TIME OF CONSTRUCTION.

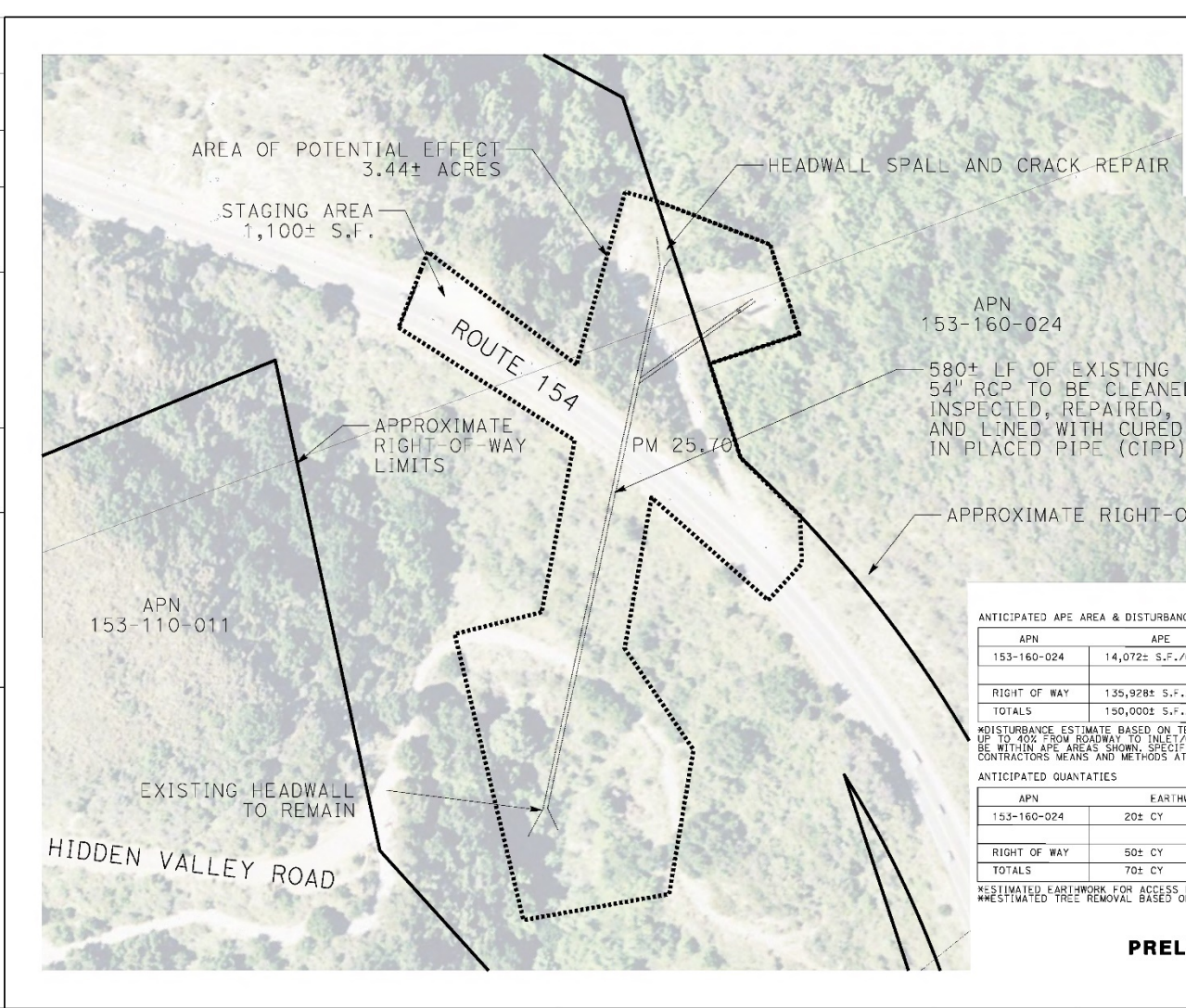
ANTICIPATED QUANTITIES

| APN | EARTHWORK | TREE REMOVALS | WORKING DAYS |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| 141-130-022 | - | - | - |
| 141-130-023 | 5± CY | - | - |
| RIGHT OF WAY | 50± CY | 2 | - |
| TOTALS | 55± CY | 2 | 8 |

*ESTIMATED EARTHWORK FOR ACCESS ROAD IS .01 CY PER LF
 *ESTIMATED EARTHWORK FOR SHOULDER AND RSP IS ANTICIPATED TO BE 50 CY. NO QUANTITY DETERMINED FOR TYPICAL CUT AND COVER TRENCHING.

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
 SCALE: 1" = 50' **L-4**

S:\GIS\GIS-ASST\GIS\Projects\154\154-160-024\154-160-024.dgn
 STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DESIGN
 SCOTT MORRIS
 CHECKED BY
 MARK DAVIS
 REVISOR BY
 JEFFREY PAYNE
 DATE REVISOR
 D.F.E. REVISOR



| | | | | | |
|------|--------|-------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| DIST | COUNTY | ROUTE | POST MILES TOTAL PROJECT | SHEET NO. | TOTAL SHEETS |
| 05 | SB | 154 | RO.0/32.84 | - | - |

PRELIMINARY
REGISTERED CIVIL ENGINEER - DATE -

PLANS APPROVAL DATE -

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OR ITS OFFICERS OR AGENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF DRAWING DETAILS OF THIS PLAN SHEET.

ANTICIPATED APE AREA & DISTURBANCE LIMITS

| APN | APE | DISTURBANCE (ACCESS ROAD) |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 153-160-024 | 14,072± S.F./0.32 AC | 3,510± S.F./0.08 AC |
| RIGHT OF WAY | 135,928± S.F./3.12 AC | 13,100± S.F./0.30 AC |
| TOTALS | 150,000± S.F./3.44 AC | 16,610± S.F./0.38 AC |

DISTURBANCE ESTIMATE BASED ON TEMPORARY 10' WIDE ACCESS ROAD ON SLOPES UP TO 40% FROM ROADWAY TO INLET/OUTLET STRUCTURE. TCE/DISTURBANCE AREAS SHALL BE WITHIN APE AREAS SHOWN. SPECIFIC TCE/DISTURBANCE LIMITS DETERMINED BY ACTUAL CONTRACTORS MEANS AND METHODS AT TIME OF CONSTRUCTION.

ANTICIPATED QUANTITIES

| APN | EARTHWORK | TREE REMOVALS | WORKING DAYS |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| 153-160-024 | 20± CY | - | |
| RIGHT OF WAY | 50± CY | 13 | |
| TOTALS | 70± CY | 16 | 13 |

ESTIMATED EARTHWORK FOR ACCESS ROADS IS 0.01 CY PER LF
 ESTIMATED TREE REMOVAL BASED ON 1 TREE PER 1000 SF OF TCE AREA

PRELIMINARY LAYOUT
 SCALE: 1" = 50' **L-12**

Appendix G Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

Aesthetics (2.1.1)

The potential for aesthetic or visual impacts to the environment as a result of the project is anticipated to be less than significant. In addition, the project will implement the following measures to further reduce potential impacts to aesthetics and visual resources.

VIS 1: Preserve as much existing vegetation as possible. Prescriptive clearing and grubbing and grading techniques that save the most existing vegetation possible will be used.

VIS 2: Revegetate all disturbed areas with native plant species appropriate to each work location.

VIS 3: Replacement planting will include aesthetic considerations as well as inherent biological goals. Revegetation will include native trees and plants determined by the Caltrans Biologist and Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture. Revegetation will occur at the maximum extent horticulturally viable and be maintained until established.

VIS 4: All visible concrete drainage elements, including but not limited to headwalls, drain inlet aprons, etc., will be colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific colors of these concrete elements will be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 5: All visible metal components related to down-drains and inlets, including but not limited to flared end sections, connectors, anchorage systems, safety cable systems, etc., will be darkened or colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific color will be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 6: All visible rock slope protection will be placed in natural-appearing shapes rather than in geometric patterns to the greatest extent possible to reduce its engineered appearance.

VIS 7: Following placement of rock slope protection, the visible rock will be colored to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific color will be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 8: Metal roadside elements, including but not limited to guardrail, guardrail transitions, and end treatments, will be stained or darkened to be

visually compatible with the rural setting. The color will be determined and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 9: If vegetation control under guardrail is deemed necessary, then a natural material such as shale will be used. The selection of the vegetation control material will be determined and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 10: The changeable message sign, including but not limited to frames, poles, truss systems, catwalks, ladders, and associated hardware, will be painted or otherwise colored to visually recede into the setting. Coloring will also include the front and side frames and back panel of the electronic sign panel itself. The color will be determined and approved in conjunction with District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS 11: Following construction, re-grade, and re-contour all new construction staging areas and other temporary uses as necessary to match the surrounding pre-project topography.

Air Quality (2.1.3)

The potential for air quality impacts generated by project construction activities is expected to be less than significant. The following measures will be implemented to further reduce potential impacts to air quality.

AIR 1: All applicable Caltrans standard measures and strategies for Air Quality, Emissions Reductions, Dust Control and Dust Palliative will be implemented during project construction.

Biological Resources (2.1.4)

Natural Communities and Regional Habitats of Concern

The following avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures will be implemented for the project to reduce potential impacts to natural communities and regional habitats of concerns.

NC 1: Prior to construction, Caltrans will obtain a Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. All permit terms and conditions will be incorporated into construction plans and implemented.

NC 2: Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed around jurisdictional features and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined environmentally

sensitive areas will be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

NC 3: Construction activities in jurisdictional waters and temporary stream diversion, if needed, will be timed to occur between June 1 and October 31 in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies, when the surface water is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will be made only with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.

NC 4: During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and cleanup materials will be kept by the contractor onsite at all times during construction.

NC 5: During construction, erosion control measures will be implemented. Appropriate fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers will be installed as needed between the project site and jurisdictional other waters and riparian habitat. At a minimum, erosion controls will be maintained by the contractor on a daily basis throughout the construction period.

NC 6: During construction, the staging areas will conform to Best Management Practices. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles will be checked and maintained by the contractor on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills.

NC 7: Stream contours will be restored as close as possible to their original condition.

The following measure will be implemented for the project to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act for natural communities and habitats of concern.

NC 8: Compensatory mitigation will be included as part of the project for natural communities and regional habitats of concern impacted by the project. Compensatory mitigation will be at a ratio of 1 to 1 (acreage) for temporary impacts and a ratio of 3 to 1 (acreage) for permanent impacts. Replacement plantings will include appropriate native plant species, appropriate plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success. The replacement plantings strategy will be detailed in the Caltrans Landscape Planting Plan and Caltrans Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will include details for mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared after the project has been approved and a full set of construction plans are

prepared, and will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Designated Critical Habitat

The avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures described for Natural Communities and Regional Habitats of Concern will also be applicable to designated critical habitats for the California red-legged frog. Additional measures are included to further reduce potential impacts to California red-legged frog designated critical habitats.

CH 1: Habitat elements that need to be removed during construction (such as trees, snags, boulders, rocks, downed trees, or logs) will be salvaged and replace onsite, as much as feasible.

The following measure will be implemented for the project to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act for California red-legged frog designated critical habitats.

CH 2: The project will revegetate uplands, replacing trees at a ratio of at least 3 to 1, and seeding ground disturbance areas with native grasses and forbs.

Invasive Species

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts associated with invasive species.

INV 1: During construction, Caltrans will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

INV 2: Only clean fill will be imported. When practicable, invasive exotic plants in the project site will be removed and properly disposed of. Any plant species rated as "High" on the Cal-IPC Invasive Plant Inventory that are removed from the construction site will be taken to a landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. Inclusion of any species that occurs on the Cal-IPC Invasive Plant Inventory in the Caltrans erosion control seed mix or landscaping plans for the project will be avoided.

INV 3: Construction equipment will be inspected to verify it is clean and weed-free by Caltrans before entering the construction site. If necessary, wash stations onsite will be established for construction equipment under the guidance of Caltrans to avoid/minimize the spread of invasive plants and/or seed within the construction area. If wash stations onsite are infeasible due to the site's space constraints, construction equipment will be cleaned offsite and then driven only on paved roads to the site.

Regional Plant Species of Concern

Santa Barbara Honeysuckle and Plummer's Baccharis

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to special-status plant species and are applicable for the Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer's baccharis.

SPS 1: Access to the construction areas will be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the work.

SPS 2: An environmentally sensitive area will be established onsite and maintained in areas where these special-status plant species occur.

SPS 3: In areas where impacts cannot be avoided, the contractor must first consider cutting vegetation only to ground level and avoid grubbing. This will allow the Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer's baccharis to easily reestablish after construction. If grading or grubbing is required, seeds and topsoil free of noxious weeds will be collected and used for re-seeding the temporarily disturbed areas where these species occur.

Regional Animal Species of Concern

California Red-Legged Frog

The project qualifies for Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved under the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Aid Program. The following measures are the applicable measures from the Programmatic Biological Opinion that will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to the California red-legged frog.

RLF 1: Only a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs. Biologists authorized under this Programmatic Biological Opinion do not need to re-submit their qualifications for subsequent projects conducted pursuant to this Programmatic Biological Opinion unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revoked their approval at any time during the life of this Programmatic Biological Opinion.

RLF 2: Ground disturbance will not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work, unless the individual(s) has/have been approved previously and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has not revoked that approval.

RLF 3: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall survey the project site no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If the species is found, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall relocate the California red-legged frog the shortest distance possible to a

location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The relocation site shall be in the same drainage to the extent practicable.

RLF 4: Before any activities begin on a project, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished.

RLF 5: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall be present at the project site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and initial disturbance of habitat has been completed. If work is stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected in a manner not anticipated by Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during review of the proposed action, the Resident Engineer will be notified immediately. When work is stopped, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall be notified as soon as possible.

RLF 6: During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers shall be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of at the end of each work week. Following construction, all trash and debris shall be removed from work areas.

RLF 7: All refueling, maintenance and staging of non-stationary equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from where a spill could drain directly toward aquatic habitat. If stationary equipment must be refueled within 60 feet of riparian habitat or water bodies, secondary containment Best Management Practices shall be implemented. The Caltrans biologist shall ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the onset of work, Caltrans shall ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

RLF 8: Habitat contours shall be returned to a natural configuration at the end of the project activities. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with culvert repair/replacement and drainage improvements, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible, or modification of original contours will benefit the California red-legged frog.

RLF 9: The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete

construction, and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.

RLF 10: Caltrans shall attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog will be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding will be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May).

RLF 11: To control sedimentation during and after project completion, Caltrans shall implement Best Management Practices outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act received for the project.

RLF 12: If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow shall be removed in a manner that will allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed shall be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material shall be removed from the streambed upon completion of the project.

RLF 13: Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water shall not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

RLF 14: Project sites shall be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials shall be used to the extent practicable. Invasive, exotic plants shall be controlled to the maximum extent practicable.

RLF 15: Caltrans shall not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive, exotic plants.

RLF 16: Upon completion of the project, Caltrans shall ensure that a Project Completion Report is completed and provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, following the template provided with the Programmatic Biological Opinion.

Coast Range Newt, Western Pond Turtle and Two-Striped Garter Snake

The measures included for California red-legged frogs are also applicable to reduce potential impacts to the Coast Range newt, western pond turtle and two-striped garter snake. Additional measures are included to further reduce potential impacts to these species.

NTS 1: A Caltrans-approved biologist will survey the project site no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities in drainages for the Coast Range newt and western pond turtle. If such species is found, the biologist will relocate the species the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The relocation site will be in the same drainage to the extent practicable.

NTS 2: Before any project activities begin, a Caltrans-approved biologist will conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training will include a description of the Coast Range newt and western pond turtle and their habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve these species for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished.

Northern California Legless Lizard, Coast Horned Lizard, Coast Patch-Nosed Snake, and Western Spadefoot Toad

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the coast horned lizard, coast patch-nosed snake and western spadefoot toad to reduce potential impacts to these species.

LST 1: Prior to construction, a qualified biologist will survey the area of potential effect and, if present, capture and relocate any western spadefoot toad, coast horned lizard, or coast patch-nosed snake to the nearest suitable habitat outside of the area of potential effect. Observations of Species of Special Concern or other special-status species will be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion.

LST 2: The project plans will delineate environmentally sensitive areas to minimize impacts to sensitive areas and species by limiting access to the minimum required for construction within the area of potential effect. No vehicle access within the environmentally sensitive areas will be permitted.

LST 3: Prior to construction, Caltrans will acquire a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. and will incorporate any additional measures relating to these species not otherwise addressed in the Natural Environment Study.

The following additional avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the Northern California legless lizard:

CLL 1: A qualified biologist will conduct preconstruction surveys for legless lizards no more than 48 hours before initial ground disturbance proposed within coast live oak woodlands and/or prior to tree removal. Where feasible,

this survey will include systematic subsurface searching (raking suitable habitat) because legless lizards are fossorial.

CLL 2: If any legless lizards are discovered during preconstruction surveys, they will be relocated to a nearby area with suitable habitat similar to where they were discovered. Also, if discovered during preconstruction surveys, a qualified biologist will be present during oak tree removal to safely relocate any legless lizards that could be uncovered during tree removal.

San Diego Desert Woodrat

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the San Diego desert woodrat to reduce potential impacts to the species.

WR 1: Prior to implementation of proposed project activities, a preconstruction visual survey will be conducted within suitable San Diego desert woodrat habitat in the area of potential effect to determine the presence or absence of woodrat nests.

WR 2: If woodrat nests are located during this survey, avoid them, and establish an environmentally sensitive area with a 25-foot buffer around each to the extent feasible.

WR 3: To the extent feasible, project activities requiring grading or vegetation removal within the 25-foot protective buffer should occur only during the non-breeding season (October 1 to December 31) to avoid noise impacts to any breeding woodrats that may occupy the nest from January through September.

WR 4: If project activities cannot avoid impacting or removing the nest, then the nest should be dismantled by hand prior to grading or vegetation removal activities. The dismantling will occur during the non-breeding season (October 1 to December 31) and be conducted so that the nest material is removed starting on the side where most impacts will occur and ending on the side where the most habitat will be undisturbed, which will allow for any woodrats in the nest to escape into adjacent undisturbed habitat.

WR 5: If young are encountered during nest dismantling, the dismantling activity should be stopped and the material replaced back on the nest and the nest should be left alone and rechecked in 2 to 3 weeks to see if the young are out of the nest or capable of being out on their own (as determined by a qualified biologist); once the young can fend for themselves, the nest dismantling can continue.

WR 6: Prior to construction, Caltrans will acquire a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. and will incorporate any additional measures relating to this species not otherwise addressed in the Natural Environment Study.

American Badger

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be included for the American badger to reduce potential impacts to the species.

AMB 1: No less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities, a qualified biologist will conduct a survey to determine if any American badger dens are present at the project site. The status of all dens should be determined and mapped. Known dens, if found occurring within the footprint of the activity, will be monitored for three days with tracking medium and/or camera traps to determine the current use. If no American badger activity is observed during this period, the den will be destroyed immediately to preclude subsequent use. If American badger activity is observed at the den during this period, the den will be monitored for at least five consecutive days from the time of the observation to allow any resident animal to move to another den during its normal activity. Only when the den is determined to be unoccupied will the den be excavated under the direction of the biologist. No disturbance of active dens will take place when cubs may be present and dependent on parental care.

AMB 2: Any observations of occupied badger dens or American badgers within the project area will be reported to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife by the project biologist.

AMB 3: No rodent control pesticides will be used, including anticoagulant rodenticides such as brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, and difenacoum. This is necessary to minimize the possibility of primary or secondary poisoning of American badgers or other special-status species.

Grasshopper Sparrow, California Spotted Owl, and Other Nesting Birds

The following measures apply to all birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code and are applicable to reduce potential impacts to the grasshopper sparrow and California spotted owl.

BRD 1: Prior to construction, vegetation removal will be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical nesting bird season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 1), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans no more than 10 calendar days prior to construction. If an active nest is found, Caltrans will implement an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be implemented until a qualified biologist has determined that juveniles have fledged or nesting activity has otherwise ceased.

BRD 2: During construction, active bird nests will not be disturbed and eggs or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code will not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time.

BRD 3: Trees to be removed will be noted on design plans. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed around the dripline of trees to be protected within project limits.

BRD 4: All clearing/grubbing and vegetation removal will be monitored and documented by the biological monitor(s) regardless of time of year.

BRD 5: If an active nest for the California spotted owl is observed within 100 feet of the area of potential effect, all project activities will immediately cease while Caltrans coordinates with applicable regulatory agencies and determines if additional measures are necessary.

Roosting Bats

The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to roosting bats.

BAT 1: Tree removal will be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical bat maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to roosting bats. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the bat maternity roosting season (February 1 to September 1), a bat roost survey will be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will also identify the nature of the bat use (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. If an active day roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist will determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that roosting activity has ceased or exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BAT 2: Prior to any culvert construction activities at post miles 16.85, 22.0, 25.70, 26.76, and 27.67, a preconstruction survey for roosting bats will be conducted by a biologist determined to be qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will identify the nature of the bat use (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. The qualified biologist will provide oversight on exclusion methods and installation and will determine whether exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BAT 3: If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts will not be disturbed or destroyed until pups are

volant (capable of flight). In areas where an occupied roost can be avoided, readily visible exclusion zones will be established using environmentally sensitive area fencing. The size/radius of the exclusion zone(s) will be determined by a qualified biologist.

Geology and Soils (2.1.7)

The project will implement the following measure to reduce potential impacts associated with soil erosions.

GEO 1: The project will include a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and Best Management Practices as part of Caltrans Standard Measures to address specific sediment and erosion controls during project construction. The project will install appropriate sediment and erosion control barriers at active construction sites, and the barriers will be maintained until construction activities are completed at those sites.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2.1.8)

The potential for greenhouse gas impacts generated by project construction activities will be reduced with the implementation of the following minimization measures.

GHG 1: All construction activities will comply with all district rules, regulations and ordinances, and statutes of the California Air Resources Board to reduce and minimize construction greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., restrictions on idling equipment, properly maintained equipment, and appropriate point sources for materials, etc.).

GHG 2: All applicable Caltrans standard measures and strategies for emissions reductions will be implemented to reduce construction-generated greenhouse gas emissions. Additional Caltrans strategies and techniques for the reduction of construction emissions will be implemented where feasible and appropriate.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials (2.1.9)

Hazardous Materials

The following minimization measure will be implemented for potential hazardous waste materials.

HAZ 1: Treated wood waste and any other hazardous waste issues common to highway construction projects will be appropriately handled, transported, and disposed of in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications. If required, more detailed hazardous waste investigations will be conducted prior to project construction to confirm the presence or absence of any pre-existing potentially hazardous waste materials.

Emergency Response and Evacuations

The following minimization measure will be implemented for Emergency Response and Evacuations.

HAZ 2: The project will include Caltrans Standard Measures and Caltrans Standard Specifications related to unanticipated emergency events to accommodate emergency responses or emergency evacuations when needed. In addition, the project will coordinate with local and regional emergency responders prior to and during construction.

Wildland Fires

The following minimization measure will be implemented for potential wildland fire.

HAZ 3: The project will include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to fire prevention and fire safety to minimize the potential of igniting nearby vegetation during construction activities, along with implementing the California Division of Safety and Health – Fire Protection and Prevention Guidance.

Noise (2.1.13)

The project will implement the following minimization measure to reduce potential impacts associated with construction-generated noise.

NOI 1: The project will include all Caltrans Standard Measures and strategies related to noise and vibration control to minimize noise-related disturbances caused by construction activities. Construction activities are not to exceed 86 decibel maximum sound levels at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Transportation (2.1.17)

The following measure will be implemented to minimize potential impacts to transportation and travelers as a result of project construction.

TRS 1: The project will include Caltrans Standard Measures for temporary traffic control in addition to implementing the strategies found in the required Transportation Management Plan to ensure traffic and emergency access is maintained on State Route 154 during project construction. In addition, the project will coordinate with local and regional emergency responders prior to and during construction.

Wildfire (2.1.20)

The measures identified for Transportation (Section 2.1.17) will also be applicable for wildfire. The following additional minimization measure will be implemented for wildfire.

WF 1: The project will include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to fire prevention and fire safety to minimize the potential for unintentional fires during construction, as well as implementing the California Division of Safety and Health – Fire Protection and Prevention Guidance.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

- Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, Noise and Water Quality Technical Assessment Memo (updated February 13, 2023)
- Climate Change Technical Report (updated February 14, 2023)
- Cultural Resources Screened Undertaking Memo (updated January 24, 2023)
- Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment Memo (updated December 30, 2022)
- Location Hydraulic Study (updated January 11, 2023)
- Natural Environment Study (updated March 15, 2023)
- Paleontological Memo (updated January 5, 2023)
- Visual Impact Assessment (updated January 23, 2023)
- Addendum to the District Preliminary Geotechnical Report (April 4, 2022)

To obtain a copy of one or more of the technical studies, reports or memos, or to obtain a copy of the Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration (this document), please send your request to:

- Matthew Fowler, Environmental Branch Chief
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93401
Phone: 805-779-0793
Email: matt.c.fowler@dot.ca.gov

With your request, please include the following information:

- Your name along with a U.S postal service mailing address, a phone number and an email address that can be used to reach you.
- Indicate the project name, project ID number and/or project EA number (located on the front cover of this document) and specify which document(s) you would like a copy of.
- If you require any alternative formats, please let us know. For individuals with sensory disabilities, the documents can be made available in Braille, in large print, in audio format, or on a computer disk.