

# Claus Road Intersection Control Improvement

On State Route 108 in Stanislaus County

10-STA-108-PM 33.2-33.8

Project Number 1019000165

## Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2



Prepared by the  
State of California Department of Transportation

April 2022



## General Information About This Document

### ***What's in this document:***

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study, which examines the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project in Stanislaus County in California. The document explains why the project is being proposed, the alternatives being considered for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

### ***What you should do:***

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans District 10 office at 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205 and the Riverbank Public Library at 3442 Santa Fe Street, Riverbank, California 95367. The document is also available online at the following web address: <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-10>.
- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Jaycee Azevedo, District 10 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205. Submit comments via email to: [Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov).
- Submit comments by the deadline: June 14, 2022.

### ***What happens next:***

After comments are received from the public and the reviewing agencies, Caltrans may 1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, 2) do additional environmental studies, or 3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

Printing this document: To save paper, this document has been set up for two-sided printing (to print the front and back of a page). Blank pages occur where needed throughout the document to maintain proper layout of the chapters and appendices.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Jaycee Azevedo, District 10 Environmental Division, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205; 209-992-9824 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (Teletype to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to Teletype), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish Teletype to Voice and Voice to Teletype), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech), or 711.

Intersection improvements and signalization of the State Route 108 and  
Claus Road intersection from post miles 33.2 to 33.8 in Stanislaus County

**INITIAL STUDY  
with Proposed 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

*James P. Henke*

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James P. Henke  
Environmental Office Chief, District 10  
California Department of Transportation  
CEQA Lead Agency

4/19/2022

Date

The following individual can be contacted for more information about this document:

Jaycee Azevedo, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California  
95205; 209-992-9824





**DRAFT**

## **Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

**State Clearinghouse Number:** pending

**District-County-Route-Post Mile:** 10-STA-108-PM 33.2-33.8

**EA/Project Number:** EA 10-1K840 and Project Number 1019000165

### **Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to reduce the number and severity of broadside collisions at the intersection of State Route 108 and Claus Road in the City of Riverbank in Stanislaus County by making intersection control improvements. The project would add traffic signals to the T-intersection of State Route 108 and Claus Road, and widen the roadway to accommodate dedicated turn lanes at the intersection. The project would also install retaining walls at the south side of State Route 108, install drainage improvements, and replace the existing metal beam guardrail on the south side of State Route 108 with standard guardrail.

### **Determination**

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans, District 10.

On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measure will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reason:

- The project would compensate for the permanent loss of 0.003 acre of non-riparian habitat that supports elderberry shrubs by purchasing a total of 0.077 valley elderberry longhorn beetle credits at an approved conservation bank that covers the project area.

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James P. Henke  
Environmental Office Chief, District 10  
California Department of Transportation

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Date



# Table of Contents

|                   |   |    |
|-------------------|---|----|
| <b>Chapter 1</b>  | Proposed Project .....  | 1  |
| 1.1               | Introduction.....   | 1  |
| 1.2               | Purpose and Need.....   | 1  |
| 1.2.1             | Purpose.....  | 1  |
| 1.2.2             | Need .....  | 1  |
| 1.3               | Project Description.....  | 1  |
| 1.4               | Project Alternatives.....   | 3  |
| 1.4.1             | Build Alternative .....   | 3  |
| 1.4.2             | No-Build (No-Action) Alternative .....  | 4  |
| 1.5               | Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion .....                    | 4  |
| 1.6               | Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives..... | 4  |
| 1.7               | Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion .....                                      | 6  |
| 1.8               | Permits and Approvals Needed .....  | 6  |
| <b>Chapter 2</b>  | CEQA Evaluation .....   | 7  |
| 2.1               | CEQA Environmental Checklist .....  | 7  |
| 2.1.1             | Aesthetics .....  | 7  |
| 2.1.2             | Agriculture and Forest Resources.....   | 9  |
| 2.1.3             | Air Quality .....   | 10 |
| 2.1.4             | Biological Resources.....   | 10 |
| 2.1.5             | Cultural Resources.....   | 13 |
| 2.1.6             | Energy.....   | 14 |
| 2.1.7             | Geology and Soils .....   | 14 |
| 2.1.8             | Greenhouse Gas Emissions .....  | 15 |
| 2.1.9             | Hazards and Hazardous Materials .....   | 17 |
| 2.1.10            | Hydrology and Water Quality .....   | 18 |
| 2.1.11            | Land Use and Planning.....  | 19 |
| 2.1.12            | Mineral Resources.....  | 20 |
| 2.1.13            | Noise.....  | 20 |
| 2.1.14            | Population and Housing.....   | 21 |
| 2.1.15            | Public Services .....   | 22 |
| 2.1.16            | Recreation .....  | 22 |
| 2.1.17            | Transportation.....   | 23 |
| 2.1.18            | Tribal Cultural Resources .....   | 23 |
| 2.1.19            | Utilities and Service Systems.....  | 24 |
| 2.1.20            | Wildfire.....   | 25 |
| 2.1.21            | Mandatory Findings of Significance .....  | 26 |
| <b>Appendix A</b> | Title VI Policy Statement.....  | 27 |





# **Chapter 1**      Proposed Project

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## **1.1 Introduction**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (known by the acronym CEQA).

Caltrans proposes to widen the roadway and install intersection control improvements at the intersection of Claus Road and State Route 108 in the City of Riverbank in Stanislaus County. Figures 1-1 and 1-2 show the project vicinity and location maps.

## **1.2 Purpose and Need**

### **1.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the project is to regulate the Claus Road and State Route 108 intersection to reduce the number and severity of broadside collisions at the State Route 108 and Claus Road intersection by improving intersection control.

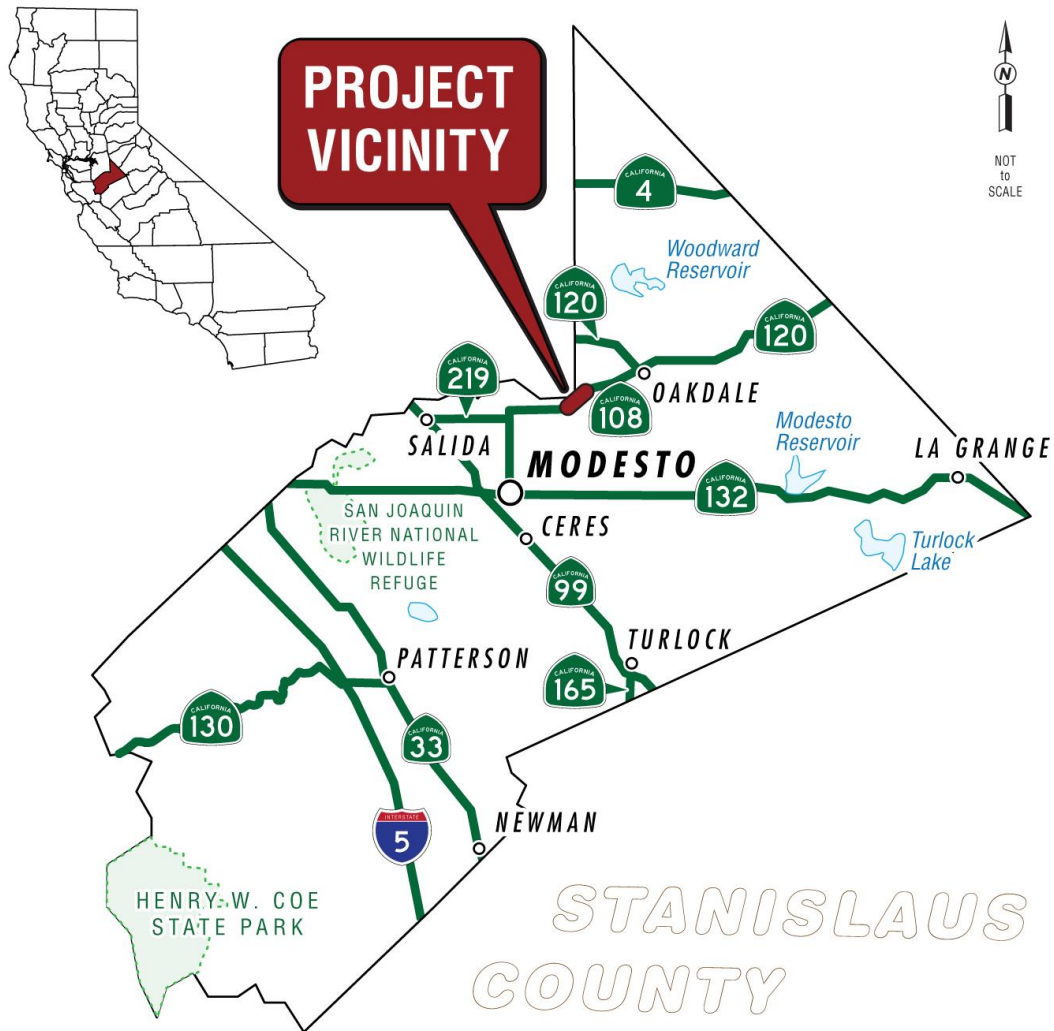
### **1.2.2 Need**

The project is needed because there is a pattern of broadside collisions identified at the intersection due to the failure to yield by motorists.

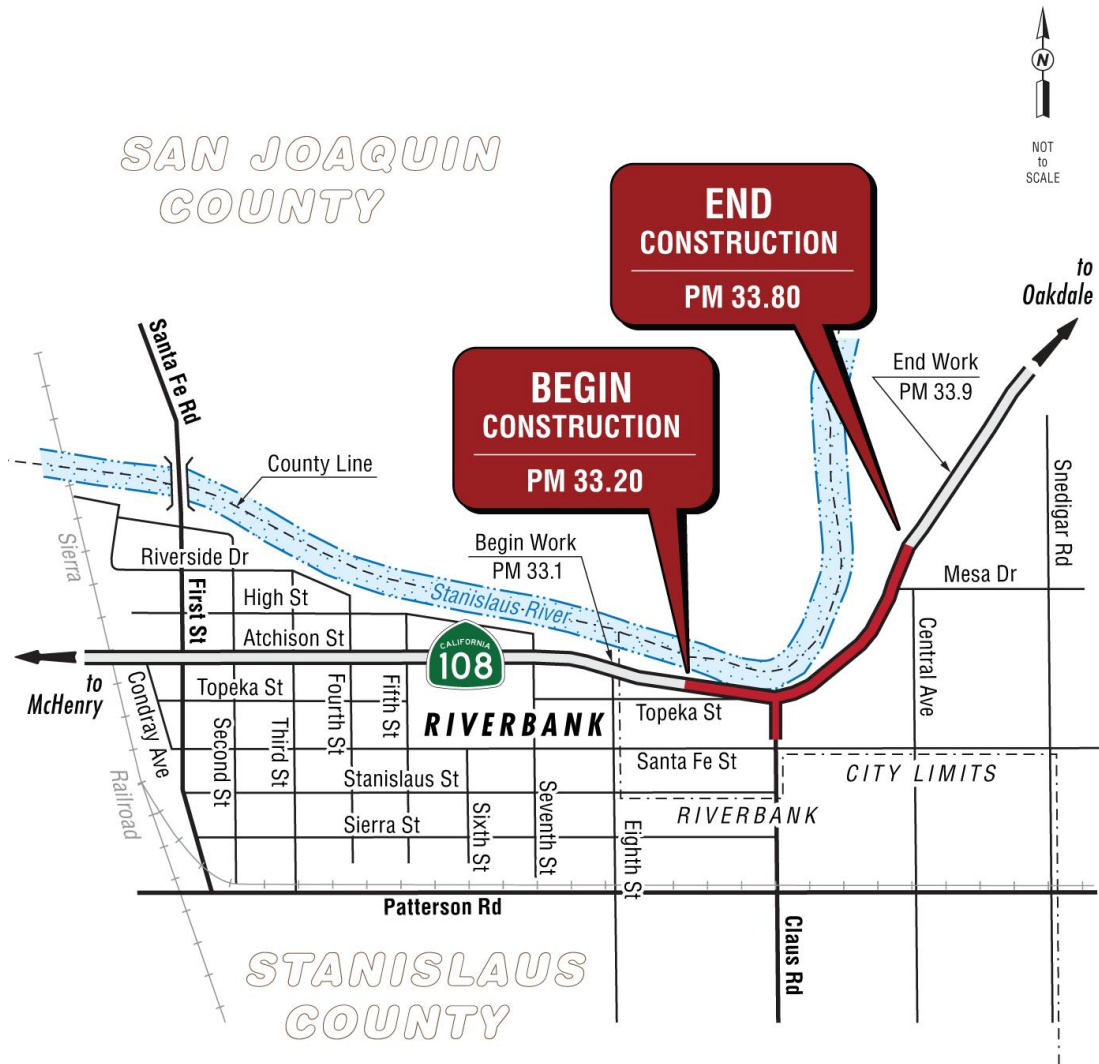
## **1.3 Project Description**

Caltrans proposes to reduce the number and severity of broadside collisions at the intersection of State Route 108 and Claus Road in the City of Riverbank in Stanislaus County by making intersection control improvements. The project would add traffic signals to the T-intersection of State Route 108 and Claus Road, and widen the roadway to accommodate dedicated turn lanes at the intersection. The project would also install retaining walls at the south side of State Route 108, install drainage improvements, and replace the existing metal beam guardrail on the south side of State Route 108 with standard guardrail.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map



**Figure 1-2 Project Location Map**



## 1.4 Project Alternatives

Under consideration for the project are two alternatives—a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

### 1.4.1 Build Alternative

The project is in Stanislaus County at the intersection of State Route 108 and Claus Road in the City of Riverbank in Stanislaus County. The project runs from post miles 33.2 to 33.8.

The work includes widening the roadway, adding traffic signals to the intersection, installing retaining walls, and improving the drainage. On State Route 108, the eastbound approach would be composed of one through lane

and one dedicated right-turn lane onto Claus Road. The westbound approach would be composed of one through lane and one dedicated left-turn lane. For the northbound approach of Claus Road, there would be one dedicated right-turn lane and one dedicated left-turn lane.

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 proposed project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.”

#### **1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative would leave the intersection in its current condition. The intersection has above-average collision rates. The collision rate is unlikely to improve without intersection control improvements. Therefore, the No-Build Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project.

### **1.5 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion**

Other project alternatives were considered but eliminated due to cost or environmental impact concerns. The original project design would have acquired a more significant amount of right-of-way from adjacent parcels to accommodate widening. The proposed right-of-way take was later reduced by incorporating nonstandard shoulder widths between 4 and 8 feet, which are now part of the current Build Alternative. A Design Standard Decision Document will be required prior to project approval.

### **1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives**

The following Best Management Practices would be implemented in the project, where applicable:

- SS-1 Scheduling
- SS-2 Preservation of Existing Vegetation
- SS-3 Hydraulic Mulch
- SS-4 Hydroseeding
- SS-5 Soil Binders
- SS-6 Straw Mulch
- SS-7 Temporary Cover and Rolled Erosion Control Products

- SS-8 Wood Mulching
- SC-7 Street Sweeping
- TC-1 Temporary Construction Entrance/Exit
- NS-8 Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning
- NS-9 Vehicle and Equipment Fueling
- NS-10 Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance
- NS-11 Pile Driving Operations
- NS-12 Concrete Curing
- NS-14 Concrete Finishing
- WM-1 Material Delivery and Storage
- WM-2 Material Use
- WM-3 Stockpile Management
- WM-4 Spill Prevention and Control
- WM-5 Solid Waste Management
- WM-6 Hazardous Waste Management
- WM-7 Contaminated Soil Management
- WM-8 Concrete Waste Management
- WM-9 Sanitary and Septic Waste Management
- WM-10 Liquid Waste Management

The following measures from the 2018 Caltrans Standard Specifications would also be implemented in the project, where applicable:

- Section 4-1.13 (Scope of Work—Cleanup)
- Section 5-1.36 (Property and Facility Preservation)
- Section 5-1.36E (Landscape)
- Section 7-1.04 (Public Safety)
- Section 7-1.02M(2) (Fire Prevention)
- Section 10-5 (Dust Control)
- Section 13 (Water Pollution Control)
- Section 14-1.02 (Environmentally Sensitive Areas)
- Section 14-6.03A (Species Protection)
- Section 14-6.03B (Bird Protection)
- Section 14-8 (Noise Control)
- Section 14-9.02 (Air Pollution Control)

- Section 14-11.03 (Hazardous Waste Management)
- Section 14-11.12 (Removal of Yellow Traffic Stripe)
- Section 14-11.14 (Treated Wood Waste)
- Section 20-1.03C(3) (Weed Control)
- Section 21-2.02F (Seed)
- Section 36-4 (Residue Containing Lead)

## 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, will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). 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 project construction:

| Agency  | Permit/Approval   | Status  |
|---|---|---|
| State Office of Historic Preservation (State Historic Preservation Officer) | Concurrence on Finding of No Historic Properties Affected                         | Concurrence was obtained on January 18, 2022.   |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  | Biological Opinion/Letter of Concurrence in response to the Biological Assessment | Response to the Biological Assessment would be obtained before the final environmental document is completed. |

# Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

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## 2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed 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 proposed project 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 Visual Impact Assessment dated November 29, 2021, 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | <b>No Impact</b>                                |

| 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? | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>             |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?   | <b>Less than Significant Impact</b>             |

**Affected Environment**

The project is on State Route 108 at the northern limits of the City of Riverbank. The general visual setting is extensively suburban and residential, with natural open space to the north near the Stanislaus River. However, ornamental vegetation, humanmade features, and utility infrastructure reduce the effective viewshed from the project site. The project is not within a State Scenic Highway and does not contain any officially designated scenic vistas.

**Environmental Consequences**

Some existing vegetation, including several oak trees, would be removed to widen the roadway. The addition of intersection traffic signal lights, guardrail, drainage ditches, and new retaining walls would potentially reduce visual quality in the project area. However, because the project would only slightly modify existing roadway width and add minor infrastructure, no significant visual impacts are anticipated. The project is consistent with local zoning and planning documents.

The project may result in temporary lighting impacts from night work. However, all night work will use standard Caltrans practices for reducing and controlling illumination as much as feasible. While the project would add permanent lighting features as part of the traffic signal improvements, the surrounding region is already urbanized with many light sources. New lighting fixtures will be down-lit to reduce night sky light pollution. No substantial new sources of lighting or glare are proposed as part of the project.

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

The project will use multiple Best Management Practices to minimize visual impacts from the project. Areas impacted by vegetation removal will be revegetated in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specification 5-1.36E



(Landscape). Any areas used for equipment staging, access, or construction will be restored per Caltrans Standard Specification 5-1.36 (Property and Facility Preservation). Any nighttime illumination will comply with Caltrans Standard Specification 7-1.04 (Public Safety).

**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.

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| 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))? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources |
|---|---|
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 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 Air Quality Memorandum dated January 24, 2022, 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                 |
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                                 |
| c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                 |
| d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                 |

### 2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study dated December 28, 2021, 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? | <b>Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated</b> |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

**Affected Environment**

The project lies within a rural and undeveloped portion of Stanislaus County. Land use next to the project area is urban fringe with residential housing. The area within the Caltrans right-of-way also contains large portions of bare ground due to the residential homes nearby.

The project falls within a climate classified as Mediterranean, characterized by hot dry summers and cool wet winters. This portion of Stanislaus County is at the base of the Diablo Range, and the topography ranges from flat prairie at the eastern end of the project to swales and foothills at the western end. The overall habitat can be classified as oak savannah and is dominated by invasive annual grasses with scattered valley oaks, California sycamore, white mulberry, oleander, Scott's pine, and other woody shrubs. Six valley oak trees will be removed to accommodate the roadway widening.

The topography in the greater project area provides suitable habitat for the burrowing owl, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, crotch bumblebee, and migratory birds and raptors, including the Swainson's hawk. The topography has the potential to facilitate seasonal wetlands, but no wetlands were observed within the project's footprint. The Stanislaus River is roughly 200 feet north of State Route 108 and is not within the project area.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

Three biological surveys were conducted to assess overall habitat condition, both within and adjacent to the project area. There are no special-status plant species, protected wetlands or other waters, or natural communities of special concern within the project area. The project would not permanently impact habitat connectivity in the area.

Ground disturbance and construction activity would potentially impact nesting burrowing owls, crotch bumblebees, and migratory birds and raptors. However, field surveys did not identify these species in the project area. Avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to identify active hives and nests prior to construction and establish protective no-work buffers.

Surveys identified multiple elderberry shrubs on the southeast side of the project area that support the federally threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Three of these shrubs would need to be removed to accommodate the proposed road widening. Construction noise, vibration, lighting, and vegetation removal may also indirectly impact valley elderberry longhorn beetles in the project area.

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

Per Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications and Standard Special Provisions Section 14-6.03A, nesting bird preconstruction surveys would be required within 14 days prior to the start of construction if work occurs within the nesting season between February 1 and September 30. Preconstruction surveys for crotch bumblebee hives would also be conducted within 7 days prior to the start of construction. Appropriate no-work buffers will be established around any nests or hives detected within the project area.

Avoidance and minimization measures will also be used to reduce potential impacts to the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. All three elderberry shrubs

that need to be removed will be transplanted from the project site prior to construction. Environmentally sensitive areas will be designated around the remaining elderberry shrubs in the project area and indicated with high-visibility fencing. No entry or work in these areas will be permitted during construction. Elderberry shrubs that are within 20 feet of the project limits will also be flagged to be avoided during construction.

Environmentally sensitive areas would be shown on contract plans and further discussed in Caltrans 2018 Standard Specifications Section 14-1.02, along with Standard Special Provisions as needed. These areas would be identified with temporary orange fencing or other high-visibility markings. Work would be stopped, and the Caltrans Resident Engineer would be notified if the contractor encroaches past these boundaries. A designated biologist would also be present to monitor any activities that may potentially impact biological resources or result in the take of regulated species.

Project activities that occur within 164 feet of an elderberry shrub will be conducted outside the March to July flight season of the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. Herbicides will not be used within the dripline of any elderberry shrubs, and any mechanical weed removal within the drip-line will be limited to the August to February season when adult beetles are inactive. Insecticides will also not be used within 164 feet of the elderberry shrubs.

Caltrans Best Management Practices and other avoidance and minimization measures would also be required during construction. These include but are not limited to mandatory worker environmental awareness training for construction personnel, biological monitoring during construction, sensitive species avoidance, coverage of trenches and excavated holes, implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, limiting artificial lighting where feasible, storage of asphalt waste at least 150 feet from any drainage feature, and revegetation of disturbed areas. A list of Best Management Practices can be found in Section 1.6 of this environmental document.

Formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be conducted for impacts to the valley elderberry longhorn beetle. The project would also compensate for the permanent loss of 0.003 acre of non-riparian habitat that supports elderberry shrubs by purchasing a total of 0.077 valley elderberry longhorn beetle credits at an approved conservation bank that covers the project area. The credit will be purchased prior to construction.

### **2.1.5 Cultural Resources**

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report, Historical Resource Evaluation Report, and Archaeological Survey Report dated November 16, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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?      | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?                              | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 2.1.6 Energy

Considering the Best Management Practices to be implemented during project construction to limit energy waste and pollutant emissions, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                            |
| b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?  | <b>No Impact</b>                            |

### 2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Paleontology Memorandum dated April 4, 2022 and Geotechnical Memorandum dated April 5, 2022, 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"> <li>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.</li> </ul> | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| iv) Landslides?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| 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 onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |
| f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?   | <b>No Impact</b>                                       |

### 2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated January 24, 2022, and the Climate Change Study dated April 1, 2022, 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?      | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                           |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | <b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>                           |

***Affected Environment***

The project is included in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan for the Stanislaus Council of Governments. The regional greenhouse gas reduction target is to achieve a level 16 percent below the 2005 per capita vehicle emission levels by the year 2035.

The plan also discusses transportation policy strategies to reduce greenhouse gas production as part of Goal 5 (“Environmental Quality”) of the county’s Regional Transportation Plan. These strategies include supporting infrastructure investments that facilitate vehicle electrification and the provision of electrification infrastructure in public and private parking facilities and structures, bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects, and supporting public transit projects as a member of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, including the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) railway expansion, the Valley Rail Project, and the Amtrak San Joaquin expansion.

***Environmental Consequences***

The project would not increase operational emissions for the project area. The purpose of the project is to regulate the Claus Road and State Route 108 intersection to reduce the number and severity of broadside collisions there by improving intersection control. The project would widen the roadway to accommodate dedicated turn lanes at the intersection without increasing roadway vehicle capacity. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 108, no increase in vehicle miles traveled or operational greenhouse gas emissions would occur as a result of project implementation.

Some greenhouse gas emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable. Construction emissions for the project were calculated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET) v1.1. Project construction is expected to generate about 116 tons of carbon dioxide during the 120 working days duration. However, because this is not a capacity-increasing project and applicable minimization measures would be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the project’s impacts would be less than significant.



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

The project will include several measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from construction. These include scheduling truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours, using construction equipment with improved fuel efficiency, maximizing the use of recycled materials, lowering the rolling resistance of highway surfaces, and balancing cut and fill quantities to reduce earthwork transporting.

**2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated March 28, 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?   | <b>Less than Significant Impact</b>                                  |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
|---|--|
| g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | <b>No Impact</b>   |

***Affected Environment***

Caltrans departmental records and multiple databases from the State Water Resources Control Board and Department of Toxic Substances Control were reviewed as part of the hazardous materials analysis. The project would widen the roadway and install traffic signals for traffic control at the intersection; it will also require the sliver take of adjacent right-of-way. The work would not involve any open remediation sites, structures work, or impacts to painted surfaces. Therefore, asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint are not anticipated on this project. Caltrans mapping also indicates that the project is unlikely to encounter any ultramafic rock outcroppings that contain asbestos.

***Environmental Consequences***

The project will involve work in unpaved areas next to the roadway, as well as guardrail replacements, which will involve potential exposure to aerially deposited lead and treated wood waste. Lead may also be encountered if the project requires cold-planing or removal of yellow traffic striping. A project-specific aerially deposited lead survey will be conducted in the design phase of the project prior to any construction activities.

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

The project will implement a number of measures to avoid and minimize potential impacts from improper handling, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials. Caltrans Standard Special Provision 14-11.14 will be added to the construction contract to manage treated wood waste from guardrail work. If cold-planing or yellow traffic stripe removal is deemed necessary for the project, Caltrans Standard Special Provisions 14-11.12 and 36-4 will also be added to the contract.

**2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality**

Considering the information in the Water Quality Compliance Memorandum dated October 21, 2021, and the Preliminary Location Hydraulic Study dated April 5, 2022, 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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:<br><br>(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite; | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| (ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| (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   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| (iv) impede or redirect flood flows?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |

**2.1.11 Land Use and Planning**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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**

Considering the information in the Mineral Resource Memorandum dated April 5, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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 Noise Compliance Study dated November 23, 2021, 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?   | Less Than Significant Impact               |

| Question—Would the project result in:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise |
|---|--|
| c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | <b>No Impact</b>                           |

***Affected Environment***

The project area contains residences and businesses that qualify as sensitive receptors within approximately 100 feet from the edge of the pavement. The project would add traffic signals to the intersection and widen the roadway to accommodate dedicated turn lanes.

***Environmental Consequences***

In general, a highway realignment that halves the distance between the current alignment and a sensitive receptor would be defined as a Type One project (23 Code of Federal Regulations 772), which has the potential for significant noise impacts. This project would shorten the distance between the sensitive receptors and the traveled way by less than half. Therefore, it would not qualify as a Type One project.

Construction activities would produce noise and vibrations in the project vicinity, but no significant impacts are expected because construction would occur in a rural setting and in accordance with the following minimization measures.

***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures***

Temporary construction noise and vibration impacts would be minimized with the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8 Noise Control. This section sets maximum noise levels for construction equipment to ensure minimal impacts to sensitive receptors.

Also, the contractor would not exceed 86 A-weighted decibels Maximum Sound Level at 50 feet from job site activities from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The contractor would also be required to use the manufacturer-recommended muffler on any construction equipment with internal combustion engines.

**2.1.14 Population and Housing**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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)? | <b>No Impact</b>  |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?   | <b>No Impact</b>  |

### 2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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:<br><br>Fire protection? | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| Police protection?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| Schools?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| Parks?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |
| Other public facilities?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                     |

### 2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                                |
| 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?                        | <b>No Impact</b>                                |

**2.1.17 Transportation**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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?         | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |
| b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |
| c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |
| d) Result in inadequate emergency access?  | <b>No Impact</b>                                    |

**2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources**

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated November 16, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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. | <b>No Impact</b>   |

### 2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Water Quality Compliance Memorandum dated October 21, 2021 and the Initial Site Assessment dated March 28, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

| 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 stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| 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?   | <b>No Impact</b>   |



| Question—Would the project:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems |
|---|--|
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>   |
| e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?  | <b>No Impact</b>   |

**2.1.20 Wildfire**

Considering the information in the Community Impact Memorandum dated March 22, 2022, the following significance determinations have been made:

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones:

| Question—Would the project:  | CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire |
|--|---|
| a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?   | <b>No Impact</b>                              |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>                              |
| 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? | <b>No Impact</b>                              |
| 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?  | <b>No Impact</b>                              |

**2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance**

| Question:   | CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance |
|---|---|
| <p>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?</p> | <p><b>No Impact</b></p>   |
| <p>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.)</p>   | <p><b>No Impact</b></p>   |
| <p>c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?</p>  | <p><b>No Impact</b></p>   |

# Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life.

September 2021

### 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 nondiscriminatory 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) 324-8379 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 1823 14<sup>th</sup> Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at [Title.VI@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Title.VI@dot.ca.gov).

A blue ink signature of Toks Omishakin, consisting of stylized cursive letters.

Toks Omishakin  
Director

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



## **List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)**

Air Quality Memorandum

Noise Compliance Study

Water Quality Compliance Memorandum

Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts)

Biological Assessment

Community Impact Memorandum

Climate Change Study

Location Hydraulic Study

Historic Property Survey Report

- Historical Resource Evaluation Report
- Archaeological Survey Report

Geotechnical Memorandum

Mineral Resources Memorandum

Paleontology Memorandum

Initial Site Assessment

Visual Impact Assessment

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Jaycee Azevedo  
District 10 Environmental Division  
California Department of Transportation  
1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205

Or send your request via email to: [Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov](mailto:Jaycee.Azevedo@dot.ca.gov)  
Or call: 209-992-9824

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Claus Road Intersection Control Improvement

General location information: On State Route 108 in Stanislaus County

District number-county code-route-post mile: 10-STA-108-PM 33.2-33.8

Project ID number: 1019000165