Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
CALTRANS DISTRICT 08
INTERSTATE 10 PM R154.9/R156.4
EA 1L040 ID No. 0819000139

Draft Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation, Department of General Services, and California Department of Food and Agriculture

November 2023

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General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study (IS) with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) to examine the potential environmental impacts of replacing the existing California Department of Food and Agriculture Border Protection Station on Interstate 10 (I-10), between Post Mile R154.9 to R156.4, in the City of Blythe, Riverside County, California. Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This document explains why the project is being proposed, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts of each proposed activity, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read this document.

- The document, maps, and Project information are available to download at the Caltrans District 8 website (https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-8/district-8-current-projects).

- We would like to hear what you think. If you have any comments about the Project or requests for a copy of this IS or related technical studies, please send comments by mail or email to:

  Caltrans, District 8
  ATTN: Gabrielle Duff, Senior Environmental Planner
  464 W. Fourth Street
  San Bernardino, CA 92401

  Or: d8.1L040.comments@dot.ca.gov **(preferred)**

- Submit comments on this document via email to: D8.1L040.comments@dot.ca.gov by the deadline: January 8, 2024

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, The Department of General Services (DGS) 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, DGS could design and build all or part of the project.

Alternative formats:

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, or digital audio. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to the California Department of Transportation, District 8, Attn: Gabrielle Duff, Senior Environmental Planner, 464 W. Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92401; or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1 (800) 735-2929 (Voice) or 711.

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SCH#XXXXXXXX
08-Riv-10 (PM R154.9/R156.4)
EA 08-1L040/ PN 0819000139

Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project on Interstate 10 from PM R154.9 to PM R156.4 in Riverside County, California

INITIAL STUDY
with (Proposed) Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

11/3/2023
Date of Approval

Kurt Heidelberg

C W

Kurt Heidelberg
Deputy District Director, Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation, District 8
CEQA Lead Agency

The following persons may be contacted for more information about this document:

Gabrielle Duff, Senior Environmental Planner
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464 West 4th Street
San Bernardino, CA 92410-1400
Phone: (909) 501-5142

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

DIST-CO-RTE-PM: 08-RIV-10- PM R154.9/156.4

EA: 1L040

Project Description

The California Department of General Services, in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) proposes to demolish and reconstruct the existing CDFA Blythe Border Protection Station with an updated facility on Interstate 10 between Post Mile R154.9 and R156.4 just west of the California/Arizona state line in the City of Blythe, Riverside County, California.

Determination

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans' intent to adopt an MND for this Project. This does not mean that Caltrans' decision regarding the Project is final. This MND is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public. Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this Project, and pending public review, has determined from this study that the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The Project would have no effect on Cultural Resources, Land Use/Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Wildfire, Vehicle Miles Traveled, and Climate Change.

In addition, the Project would have a less than significant impact on Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry, Air Quality, Energy, Geology/Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology/Water Quality, Noise, Transportation, and Utilities/Service Systems.

With the following measures incorporated, the proposed project would have a less than significant effect on Biological Resources:

BIO-1: preconstruction survey for special-status plant species shall be conducted within suitable habitat within the Project footprint.
BIO-2: Environmental Training Session.
BIO-3: Qualified Biologist/Biological Monitor.
BIO-4: qualified biologist shall identify locations for the placement of ESA fencing along the limits of the work area.
BIO-5: A qualified biologist shall conduct a survey of the work area for special-status animal. species.
BIO-6: Construction Contractor shall avoid vegetation removal and trimming during the breeding season for birds.
BIO-7: Determine the number of access routes and the total area of construction activity prior to construction.

BIO-8: A qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction burrowing owl survey Between February 15 and July 15 and no less than 14 days prior to vegetation removal and/or ground disturbance activities.
BIO-9: Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
BIO-10: Prior to construction, all temporarily impacted acreages of Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Bush Seepweed Scrub and Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest shall be mitigated on and/or off-site
BIO-11: Construction Best Management Practices
BIO-12: Work within the Drainage 1 streambed shall be restricted to the low-flow season between June 15 and October 15.
BIO-13: the temporarily impacted areas of Drainage 1 shall be returned to its original contour and condition to the greatest extent feasible
BIO-14: Construction Equipment Maintenance, Refueling, and Storage

Signature

Kurt Heidelberg
Deputy District Director, Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation, District 8

Date

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Chapter 1 – Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of General Services (DGS), in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), proposes to replace and relocate the existing California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Blythe Border Protection Station (BPS) (herein referred to as the "Project") with an updated facility on Interstate 10 (I-10) just west of the California/Arizona state line. DGS is the owner's project management representative for the CDFA to manage this project and is the sponsor and implementation agency as it relates to work within the Caltrans right-of-way. Caltrans will be the Lead Agency for purposes of both California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance. While the DGS will design and construct the new facility, upon completion of construction, the CDFA will operate the facility.

1.1.1 Project Location

The Project is on I-10 in the City of Blythe between Post Mile (PM) R156.4 (eastern end) approximately 0.2 mile west of the California/Arizona border line to PM R154.9 (western end). Uses to the north of the Project site include Hobsonway, agricultural land, F Canal, a mobile home park (Blythe Marina Estates), and Quechan Park, while uses to the south of the Project site include eastbound I-10, East Donlon Street, agricultural land, and the Cove RV Resort. The Colorado River Bridge, spanning the border between California and Arizona, is east of the Project site. Agricultural uses, a mobile home community (El Rancho Estates), and rural residential uses are west of the Project site. The regional and local context of the Project site and surrounding areas is detailed in **Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-2**, respectively.

1.1.2 History and Existing Setting

The CDFA maintains a system of 16 BPSs along major roadways where vehicles and commodities entering the State are inspected to ensure they are pest free and meet all regulatory requirements. Most years, the 16 border stations in California screen 20 million private vehicles and 7 million commercial vehicles. Annually, an average of 82,000 lots of plant material (e.g., fruits, vegetables, plants) are rejected by inspectors Statewide due to violation of California or federal plant quarantine laws. Watercraft, self-movers, recreational vehicles and utility vehicles comprise approximately five percent of the vehicles that pass through the stations annually. Commercial vehicles account for approximately 25 percent of the traffic, while private passenger vehicles comprise the remaining 70 percent of traffic that must be screened.

The Blythe BPS was initially constructed in 1958 to handle 600,000 vehicles annually. With continued growth, traffic is anticipated to exceed 6 million vehicles annually. Approximately 0.5 mile west of the existing station, an on/off ramp provides access to/from Hobsonway. The Hobsonway ramp currently operates with all-way stop control. The Hobsonway ramps and Hobsonway itself are both two-lane, undivided roadways.

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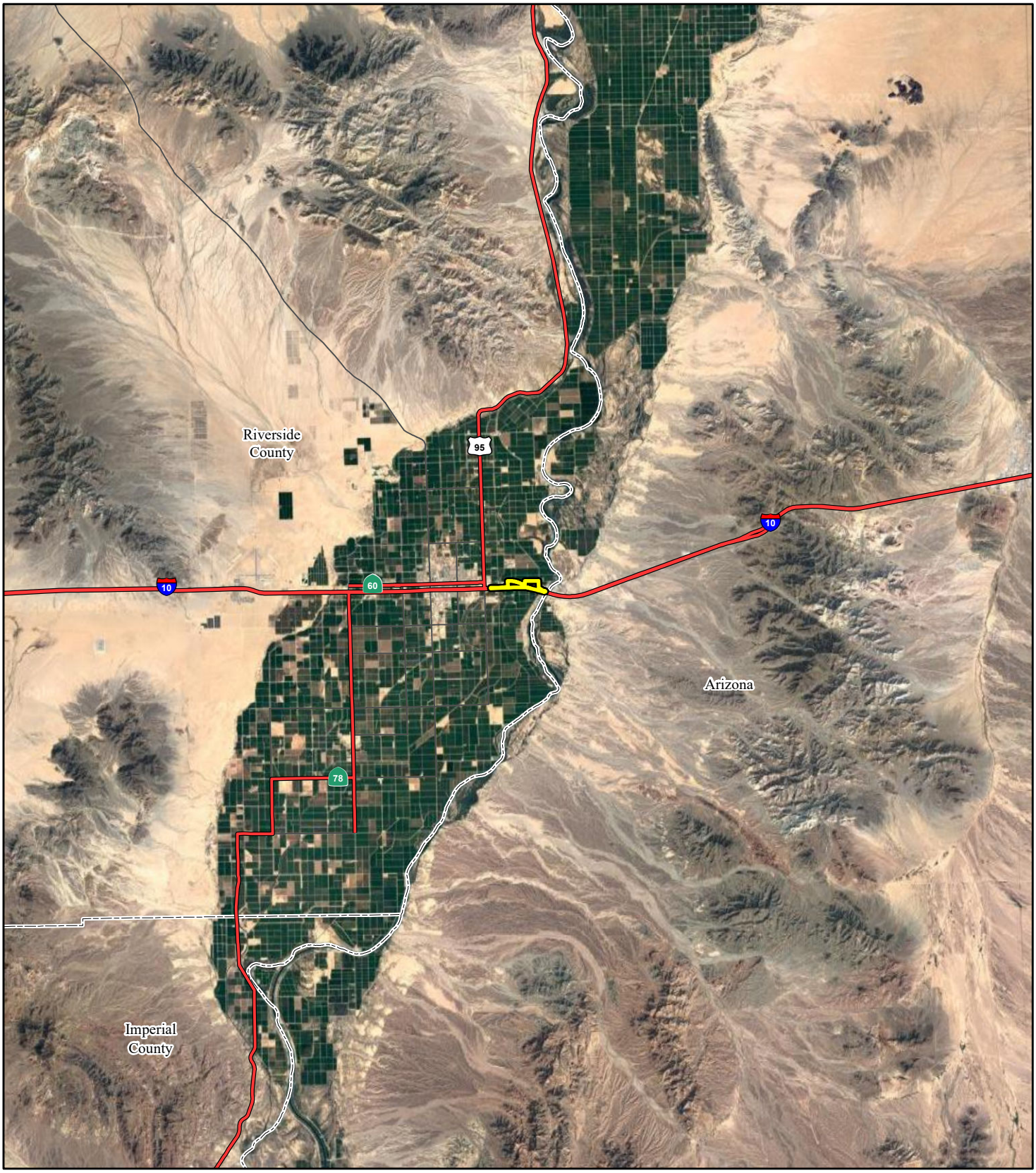

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Project Area

FIGURE 1-1

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SOURCE: Googlr Imagery (2022); Psomas (2/2022)

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Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project

Regional Location

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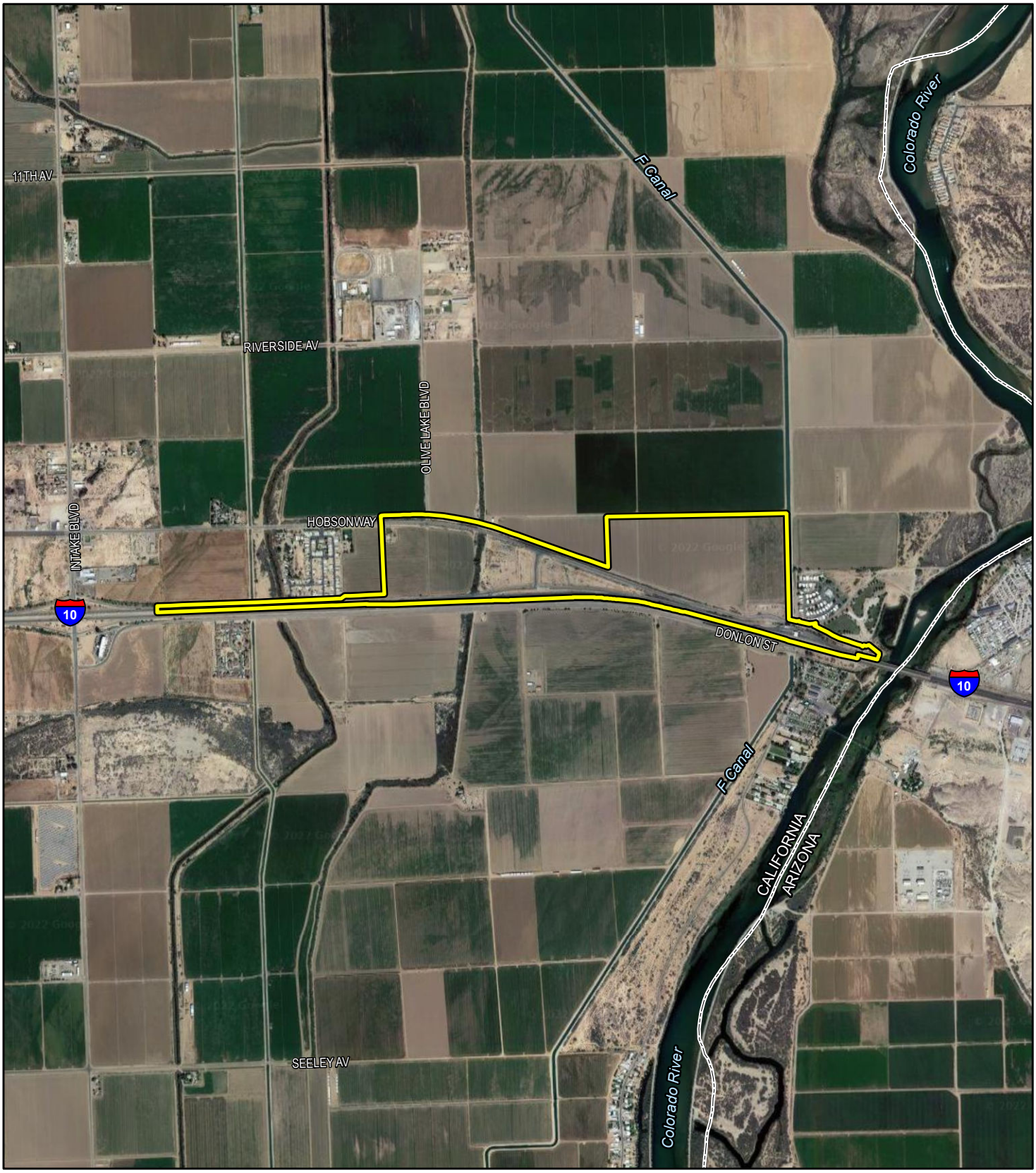

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Project Area

FIGURE 1-2

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Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project

Project Area

SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quad - *Blythe* (1975); Psomas (2/2022)

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Due to the high traffic volume through the current station, limited number of inspection lanes, and the limited storage queue length to the Colorado River Bridge, motorists experience an extended queue along I-10 that may extend, on occasion, onto the Colorado River Bridge and into Arizona. This extended queue creates a potential safety issue that may lead to the temporary discontinuance of vehicle inspections. As the station serves the vitally important purpose of safeguarding California's economy from threats posed by noxious, diseased, or invasive pests/species, any such disruption of vehicle inspections puts California's economy at risk and interferes with its ability to provide a safe, abundant, and high-quality food supply.

The existing Blythe BPS is composed of a four-lane inspection structure occupying the westbound lanes of I-10. The two southernmost lanes are used for personal vehicle inspections. The two remaining lanes are used for commercial truck, buses, RVs, and pickup inspections. A small building (inspection office building) is underneath the north side of the inspection structure. For vehicles that need further inspection, an area north of the existing inspection structure allows for vehicles to pull to the side of I-10 for a detailed inspection.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose of the Project

The Purpose of the Project is to relocate the existing Blythe BPS to provide a facility that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities and to a location that improves traffic operations along westbound I-10.

1.2.2 Need for the Project

The Project is needed for the following reasons:

- Prevent the entry of invasive species and thereby protect California economy from threats posed by noxious, diseased, or invasive pest/species
- Provide a facility of sufficient size and with sufficient features to comprehensively support border protection operations
- Provide a facility located and designed to accommodate inspection operations resulting from current and forecast traffic volumes on I-10 and alleviate current traffic operation deficiencies at the current facility
- Improve safety along this segment of I-10 for border protection personnel and the general public

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Chapter 2 – Project Description

2.1 Introduction

This section describes the proposed action and the project alternative developed to meet the purpose and need of the Project while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts. There are two Alternatives being considered: a No-Build Alternative and a Build Alternative.

2.2 Build Alternative – Proposed Project

Under the Build Alternative, the existing Blythe BPS will be demolished, and a new facility would be reconstructed approximately 0.66 mile west of the existing station. The two existing westbound I-10 lanes (east of the Project site) will be re-aligned at the Project site to divert vehicles to inspection booths. The two existing westbound lanes will be widened at the relocated BPS to accommodate five lanes for passenger vehicles and four additional lanes for commercial trucks. The additional lanes would be within the limits of the relocated BPS, would be for inspections only, and would not provide additional I-10 westbound through-lanes. A 30-foot-wide shoulder would also be constructed north of the four commercial truck lanes to accommodate bypass of oversized vehicles and to permit temporary commercial truck staging and inspection activities. All lanes would merge back into the existing two westbound I-10 lanes near Post Mile 154.9.

The site plan for the proposed BPS facility is provided in **Figure 2-1**. Development of the Blythe BPS is anticipated to include the following components.

2.2.1 Inspection Canopies

The Project proposes the development of three inspection canopies: a vehicle inspection canopy, a preliminary commercial truck inspection canopy, and a main commercial truck inspection canopy. The inspection canopies will be a minimum of 16 feet, 6 inches in height but could vary depending on the vehicle clearance requirements. Canopies will also be included for an Outdoor Staff Break Area and Staff/Visitor/Vehicle Parking. The vehicle inspection canopy will be approximately 4,960 square feet (124 feet x 40 feet) with five lanes for passenger vehicle traffic. The preliminary commercial truck inspection canopy will be approximately 3,200 square feet (80 x 40 feet) with four inspection lanes for commercial trucks. The main truck inspection canopy, which will be to the west of the other canopies, will be approximately 3,200 square feet (80 x 40 feet) with four lanes for more thorough inspection of commercial trucks. The canopies area may be increased based on the final design.

2.2.2 Wind Screen

The Project will include wind screens to mitigate wind velocity for the inspectors. Wind screens may consist of berms, landscaping, fencing and/or screens. If fencing or screening is used, they will be placed outside of the Caltrans' right of way and will not exceed 12 feet in height.

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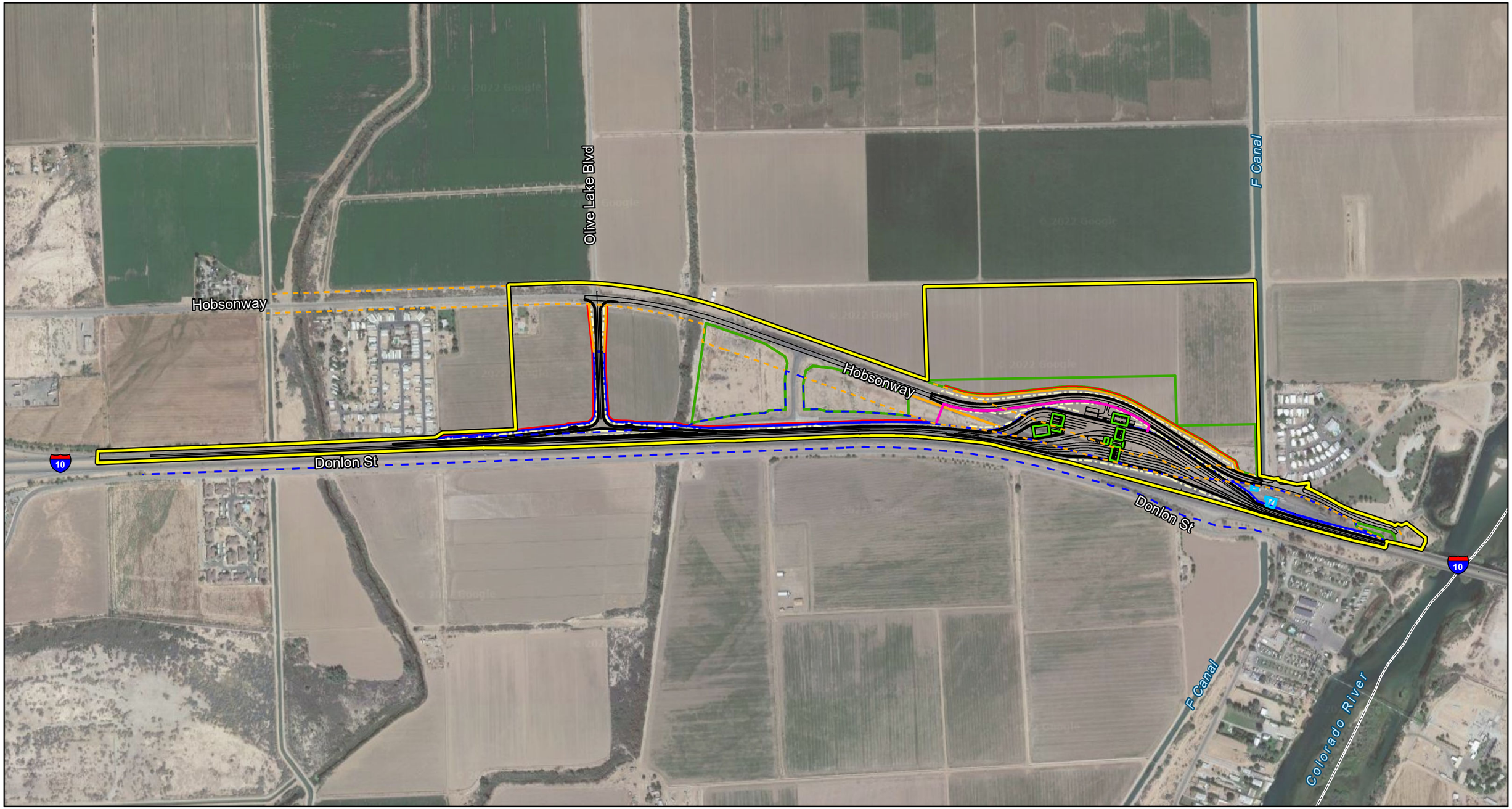

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LEGEND

- Project Area
- Existing Caltrans Right-of-Way
- Existing City Right-of-Way
- Proposed Caltrans Right-of-Way
- Proposed City Right-of-Way
- Proposed CDFA Right-of-Way
- Alignment and Project Design
- Edge of Pavement
- Grading Limit
- Temporary Construction Easement
- Staging Area
- Proposed BPS Structures
- Existing CDFA Inspection Station

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SOURCE: Google (2020), Psomas (10/22/2021)

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FIGURE 2-1

Blythe Border Protection Replacement Project

Site Plan

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2.2.3 Inspection Buildings

The Project includes the development of two inspection buildings: a main vehicle inspection building, and a commercial truck inspection building. The main vehicle inspection building will be approximately 4,100 gross square feet and will include a lobby and office space, locker facilities, small meeting room, work room, equipment rooms, a kitchen/break room, restrooms, and storage areas. The approximately 2,900-square-foot commercial vehicle inspection building will provide lobby and office space, a multipurpose room, storage areas, and restrooms. Both inspection buildings will be developed and equipped to accommodate CDFA staff and operations, as well as other visiting cooperative State agency personnel (e.g., California Highway Patrol [CHP], CalRecycle) using and/or assigned to the BPS for temporary operations. The inspection buildings will be designed with modern, non-glare materials. A misting system may be provided at the inspection areas to provide comfort in the heat.

2.2.4 Parking

The Project will be designed with a surface parking lot with 25 parking stalls (one van accessible handicap and one handicap accessible stall and two electric vehicle [EV] stalls) to accommodate staff/employees of the facility. This parking lot will be located north of the commercial truck inspection lanes and will be accessed via a 30-foot-wide driveway from the realigned Hobsonway right-of-way. A second visitor parking area with four parking stalls (including one EV stall and one van accessible handicap stall) will be developed just west of the passenger vehicle inspection building. This second parking area will allow passenger vehicles to be staged in this area if directed by CDFA staff and will be accessed via the vehicle inspection lanes on the south side of the facility. A parking area for up to four emergency vehicles or CHP will also be developed adjacent to the visitor parking area.

2.2.5 Solar Array

The Project will include an approximately 100 kilowatt (kW) to 151 kW solar array to provide electricity to the Project. At a minimum, the solar array will cover the proposed parking areas and will offset 100 percent of the Project's energy consumption. The Project may also include solar panels on the proposed buildings. In this scenario, the Project would generate more than double the amount of energy needed to service the Project.

2.2.6 Generator/Emergency Power

The Project will include a liquified petroleum gas-fueled emergency generator in a separate enclosure to provide the facility with uninterrupted power for 96 hours in the event of loss of power. The generator will be outside of Caltrans' right-of-way and north of the staff parking area.

2.2.7 Sewer System

The Project will construct a small force sewer pump system within the footprint of the Blythe BPS and outside of Caltrans right of way. The sewer pump system will feed into the relocated 6-inch force sewer line along the new Hobsonway alignment.

2.2.8 Watercraft Washing Area

The Project will include a paved watercraft washing area that will be sloped to a drain inlet that will have a sump so that any debris can be captured and removed before flowing into the storm drain system.

2.2.9 Apiary Bee Spray Area

The Project will include an area to mist trucks carrying apiary (bee) shipments.

2.2.10 Incinerator

The Project will include a 23 foot, 10-inch-high aluminized steel liquified petroleum gas-fueled incinerator for disposing of seized agricultural materials and firewood. The incinerator will be north of the staff parking area.

2.2.11 Stormwater Management and Drainage

The Project will include the construction of two vegetated infiltration basins and two design pollution prevention infiltration areas (DPPIA) to collect stormwater runoff and provide treatment to improve water quality. The infiltration basins and DPPIAs will contain and infiltrate stormwater runoff from the developed areas and a portion of the new roadways. Similar to the existing drainage condition, stormwater runoff from some portions of the new roadways and repaved areas that are not captured by the infiltration basins and DPPIAs will continue to collect along roadway embankments and in low-lying areas to infiltrate or flow to an irrigation canal or unnamed channel and eventually into the Colorado River.

2.2.12 Utility Connections/Relocations

Existing utilities along Hobsonway will be relocated to a new location beneath the re-aligned Hobsonway to remain outside the future Caltrans right-of-way. In addition, the Project will construct new utility connections to provide necessary utilities (e.g., gas, telecommunication, water, and sewer) to the new BPS buildings.

2.2.13 Trail Improvements

An existing trail located between Hobsonway and I-10 provides access to the Colorado River Bridge. This asphalt trail does not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design requirements. Caltrans is currently in final design of the reconstruction of this trail as part of their pavement rehabilitation project (Caltrans EA #08-1C08U), which is to be constructed before the Blythe BPS project is constructed. The trail will be lengthened to the west along the south side of Hobsonway to achieve ADA requirements. The Blythe BPS project will demolish the existing BPS structures and flatwork, hydroseed, and install a new fence adjacent to the I-10 to prevent vehicle entry but with a gate to allow Caltrans entry into area. Additional minor passive improvements may be incorporated into this portion of the project, such as walk and bicycle paths, berms, and signage.

2.2.14 Property Ownership and Acquisition

The existing BPS is fully within Caltrans right-of-way. Ownership of other properties within the Project limits is detailed in Table 2.1.

Development of a new BPS, relocation of the existing Hobsonway ramps, and the realignment of Hobsonway will require the acquisition of 17.15 acres of property. A summary of anticipated acquisitions is provided in Table 2.1.

Parcel ownership and required sizes will be confirmed and/or verified during the DGS Site Selection and Acquisition process.

Table 2.1: Parcel Ownership and Acquisition

Parcel	Parcel Size (acres)	Ownership	Amount of Land from Parcel to be Acquired (acres)
833-270-005	48.90	Metropolitan Water District	11.02
833-270-006	20.00	D. Nowell	0.68
833-270-007	3.27	S. Smith	2.29
833-270-024	1.84	S. Tarnutzer	0.03
833-270-011	15.35	J. Schuringa	2.13
857-160-031	14.51	K. Krisell	0.67
857-160-033	13.90	T. Farrage	0.33
TOTAL			**17.15**

2.2.15 Hobsonway Improvements and new Hobsonway/I-10 Ramps

As part of the Project, Hobsonway will be relocated to the north of its existing alignment to accommodate the new location of the Blythe BPS. Similar to the current condition, the realigned Hobsonway would retain two travel lanes (one eastbound and one westbound), and would be improved with a 14-foot-wide striped median, new 8-foot-wide shoulders, and a 18-foot-wide driveway to enter the new Blythe BPS and another 18-foot wide driveway to exit back onto Hobsonway. The project would also remove the existing Hobsonway ramps at I-10 and relocate them west of their existing location. The relocated ramps connecting Hobsonway and I-10 will use an existing easement (Olive Lake Boulevard) between two parcels.

Figure 2-2 illustrates the relocated ramps that will connect Hobsonway and I-10.

2.3 Construction

2.3.1 Staged Construction and Traffic Management

To facilitate construction and minimize any schedule delays due to utility relocations, Hobsonway would be constructed first as an initial phase. Some minor grading improvements within the new BPS parking area may be included during this initial phase to allow utility pads and equipment to be constructed and stubbed in preparation for the eventual construction of the BPS buildings. This would allow Hobsonway and the existing utilities beneath Hobsonway to be relocated so they would be outside the future Caltrans right-of-way. After Hobsonway and the utilities are relocated, construction of the new BPS buildings and the majority of the new I-10 vehicle lanes would be constructed as part of the second phase of construction. The majority of the second phase of construction would not impact the westbound lanes of I-10. Temporary K-rail would be placed along the edge of pavement along the westbound lanes of I-10 to help segregate the construction activities north of I-10 and south of the realigned Hobsonway. The new westbound Hobsonway ramps would also be constructed during this phase while keeping the existing Hobsonway ramps operational. The existing BPS facility would also remain operational with no impacts to westbound I-10 while the new BPS facility is constructed. Once the new BPS facility is constructed, the existing westbound Hobsonway ramps would close, the newly constructed westbound Hobsonway ramps would open and the new westbound connecting lanes along

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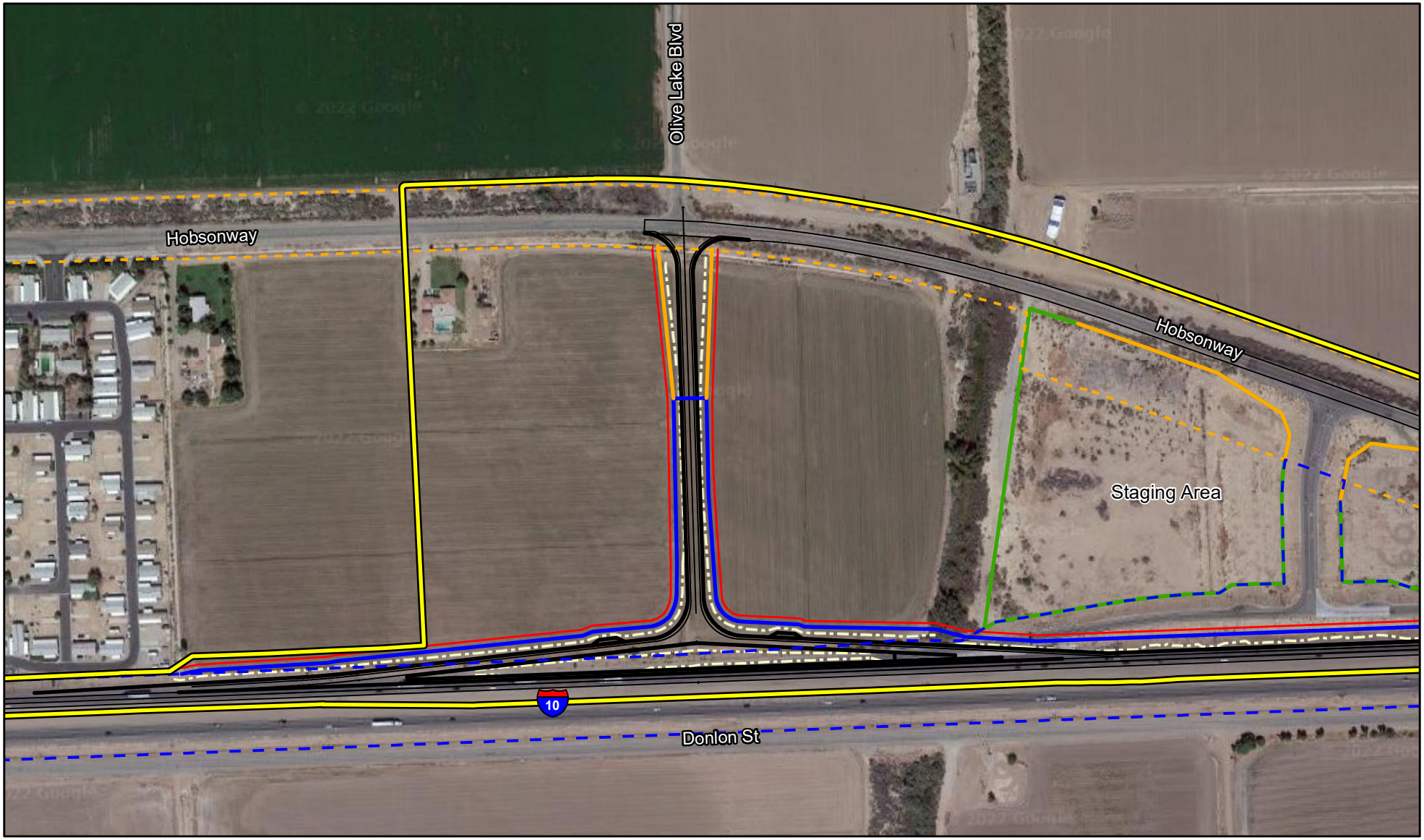

LSA

LEGEND

- Project Area
- Existing Caltrans Right-of-Way
- Existing City Right-of-Way
- Proposed Caltrans Right-of-Way
- Proposed City Right-of-Way
- Alignment and Project Design
- Edge of Pavement
- Grading Limit
- Staging Area
- Temporary Construction Easement

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FIGURE 2-2

Blythe Border Protection Replacement Project

Hobsonway/I-10 Connection

SOURCE: Google Imagery (2022); Psomas (10/22/2021)

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a new alignment would be constructed within the existing median area adjacent to the existing BPS facility so that future vehicles would be able to travel westbound parallel to the eastbound lanes and no longer diverge into the existing BPS inspection booths. After construction is complete within the median area, transitions connecting the newly constructed median area near the existing BPS facility and the previously constructed BPS vehicle lanes serving the new BPS facility would be constructed during off-peak periods and/or overnight to minimize traffic impacts. Vehicles would then be diverted to the new BPS facility while the existing BPS facility is demolished.

For areas currently owned by Caltrans that the City of Blythe wishes to acquire through relinquishment or excess land sale, the existing roadway surfacing may be partially or fully removed pending further evaluation.

2.3.2 Schedule

The Project will be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 will include the relocation of Hobsonway and associated utility relocations and is scheduled to start in November of 2024 and be completed in January of 2026. All other work will be completed in Phase 2, which is scheduled to start construction in July of 2026 and end in December 2027.

2.3.3 Site Cleanup and Post-Construction Activities

After the existing BPS facility is demolished, the existing westbound Hobson Way ramp paving would be removed and regraded to maintain existing drainage flow patterns. In addition, minor passive improvements may be incorporated into the trail improvements area, such as walk and bicycle paths, berms, and signage.

2.4 No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, no improvements to the existing Blythe BPS nor Hobsonway would occur. The No Build Alternative would continue the current BPS access and lane configurations. This would result in continued queuing into Arizona and associated traffic delays and safety concerns along I-10 and the need to temporarily stop inspections of vehicles entering California when backups reach the Colorado Bridge. Future buildout of land in the vicinity of the Project site would exacerbate these issues.

The No Build Alternative would continue utilizing the small and outdated Blythe BPS for its inspection activities. This would limit the ability of the staff to improve inspection activities.

2.5 Permits and Approvals Needed

Agency	Permits/Approvals	Status
California Department of Transportation District 8/Federal Highway Administration	Oversight for CT R/W & Lead Agency – CEQA/NEPA & SCE, PR & CEQA Approval, PS&E Approval, Testing & Inspections – CT R/W, IAA – PA&ED & Construction, Encroachment Permits	
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Office of the State Fire Marshal, Fire and Life Safety Division – North	Permit – Fire, Life & Safety, Inspections, TCO & CO	
Division of State Architects	Permit – Access Compliance and Structures within CT R/W	
Metropolitan Water District	Temporary Entry Permit (TEP), Permanent Easement – Approval of Plat and Legal, Appraisal, Design & Environmental Documents. (Required prior to AQ Phase Being Finalized)	
Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District	Permit – Incinerator and Emergency Generator	
City of Blythe	Design Approval and Inspections Oversight	
Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters within the California River Basin Region (Order R7-2015-006, NPDES No. CAG997001)	
State Water Resources Control Board	California Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002 (as amended by 2010-0014-DWQ and 2012-0006-DWQ)	
State Water Resources Control Board	Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit Order No. 2012-0011-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003 (as amended by Order Nos. WQ 2014-0006-EXEC, WQ 2014-0077-DWQ, WQ 2015-0036-EXEC, and WQ 2017-0026-EXEC	
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 (Streambed Alteration Agreement)	

Chapter 3 – CEQA Environmental Checklist

Project Description and Background

Project Title: Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project

Lead Agency Name: California Department of Transportation District 8

Address: 464 W. Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92401

Contact Person: Gabrielle Duff, Senior Environmental Planner

Phone Number: (909) 501-5142

Project Sponsor's Name: California Department of General Services

Address: 707 3rd Street, 4th Floor, West Sacramento, CA 95605

Project Location: City of Blythe, Riverside County, California

General Plan Description: Public/Quasi-Public, Agriculture, General Commercial, Commercial Office, Neighborhood Commercial, Open Space, Medium Density Residential.

Zoning: Public/Quasi-Public, Agriculture, Specific Plan Resort, General Commercial, Commercial Office, Neighborhood Commercial, Open Space, Medium Density Residential.

Description of Project: The California Department of General Services (DGS) in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) proposes to demolish and reconstruct the existing California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Blythe Border Protection Station (BPS) with an updated facility on Interstate 10 (I-10) between Post Mile (PM) R154.9 and R156.4, just west of the California/Arizona state line in the City of Blythe, Riverside County, California.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: The Project is on I-10 in the City of Blythe between post mile (PM) R156.4 (eastern end) approximately 0.2 mile west of the California/Arizona border line to PM R154.9 (western end). Uses to the north of the Project site include Hobsonway, agricultural land, F Canal, a mobile home park (Blythe Marina Estates), and Quechan Park while uses to the south of the Project site include eastbound I-10, E Donlon Street, agricultural land, and the Cove RV Resort. The Colorado River Bridge, spanning the border between California and Arizona, is east of the Project site. Agricultural uses, a mobile home community (El Rancho Estates), and rural residential uses are west of the Project site.

Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board, Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board

Native American Consultation

Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21080.3.1?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, ensure that consultation and heritage resource confidentiality follow PRC sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2 and California Government Code 65352.4.

Neither the DGS, the CDFA, nor Caltrans has been contacted by California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area to request consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) §21080.3.1. However, as further detailed in Section 3.18 of this Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), DGS, CDFA and Caltrans notified all area tribes listed by the Native American Heritage Commission, via letter and email, about the proposed project and solicited questions and concerns regarding cultural resources. Letters were sent via mail on May 20, 2020. Caltrans did not receive any responses to either the letters or emails. Therefore, on February 5, 2021 and again on March 9, 2021, Caltrans sent follow-up emails to the tribal representatives. No response was received. On September 20, 2021, another letter was sent to the tribal representatives under the auspices of CEQA, specifically PRC 21080.3.1 and the Chapter 532 Statutes of 2014 (i.e., AB 52). Again, no response was received.

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See PRC Section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per PRC Section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that PRC Section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project. Please see the checklist beginning on page 3-4 for additional information.

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

Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

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

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

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

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

Print Name	Signature	Date

CEQA Environmental Checklist

DIST-CO-RTE: 08-RIV-10 PM/PM: R154.9/156.4 EA/Project No.: 1L040

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects indicate no impacts. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. Where there is a need for clarifying discussion, the discussion is included either following the applicable section of the checklist or is within the body of the environmental document itself. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

3.1 Aesthetics

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Visual Impact Memorandum[1].

a) No Impact

A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the general public. Aesthetic components of a scenic vista generally include: (1) scenic quality, (2) sensitivity level, and (3) view access. In Blythe, the primary aesthetic and scenic resources in the City and surrounding region are the Colorado River and the mountains surrounding the City on the north, east, and south. The project site is not designated as a scenic resource in the City of Blythe General Plan or the City's Colorado River Corridor Plan. The project area is rural and is primarily characterized by cultivated agricultural lands. Development in the project vicinity includes the existing BPS,

[1] LSA Associates, Inc. 2023e. Scenic Resource Evaluation and Visual Impact Assessment. February.

I-10, local roadways, irrigation canals, and recreational and rural residential uses. The proposed BPS would be consistent with the land uses within the project corridor and nearby vicinity.

The existing Blythe BPS is composed of a four-lane inspection structure occupying the westbound lanes of I-10. The two southernmost lanes are used for personal vehicle inspections. The two remaining lanes are used for commercial truck, buses, RVs, and pickup inspections. A small building (inspection office building) is underneath the north side of the inspection structure. For vehicles that need further inspection, an area north of the existing inspection structure allows for vehicles to pull to the side of I-10 for a detailed inspection. There is no existing landscaping.

Public views in the vicinity of the project site are generally characterized by the surrounding cultivated agricultural lands. Scenic views of the surrounding mountains are partially obstructed by existing development and trees and the Colorado River is minimally visible due to surrounding topography and intervening development and trees.

The project would construct a new facility that includes more inspection lanes; more inspection features, such as a watercraft washing area, a backup generator, and an incinerator; and larger, more modern and better equipped inspection stations. The main structural components of the project include a vehicle inspection building, truck inspection building, canopies for the vehicle inspection building and truck inspection building, parking lots, and a solar canopy. The project would also include landscaping in the station's approach and egress median spaces, between the BPS station and I-10's west-bound lanes, and between the BPS station and Hobsonway.

The project would be larger than the existing Blythe BPS; it would include more inspection lanes, more buildings, canopies for shade and energy, more parking, larger signage, and site landscaping. However, the colors and shapes of the buildings and site features, including landscaping, have been designed with a "River to Farm" theme to be consistent with and sensitive to the natural environment and visual character of this gateway location between the Colorado River and cultivated agricultural lands. The proposed facility would not block views of the distant mountain range. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. **No impact** would occur, and no mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

Within the project limits, I-10 is not part of the National Scenic Byway system or designated as a California State Scenic Highway. The nearest Eligible State Scenic Highway is over 30 miles from the project site and the nearest Officially Designated State Scenic Highway is over 100 miles from the project site. Furthermore, the proposed project would not result in the damage to any scenic resources including trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings. Therefore, there would be **no impact,** and no mitigation is required.

c) Less Than Significant

The project site is in a non-urbanized area that is primarily surrounded by cultivated agricultural lands. The project site is not designated as a scenic resource in the City of Blythe General Plan or the City's Colorado River Corridor Plan.

During project construction activities, the visual character of the area would change with the introduction of construction equipment, construction materials, construction equipment

staging areas, and construction workers. This change in visual character would be visible to motorists approaching the project site from I-10 and users of the nearby park, RV resort, and mobile home park. However, these activities would be confined to the project site and would not degrade the visual characteristics of the agricultural uses surrounding the site. Additionally, the change of visual character at the project site during construction would be temporary in nature and would be returned to preconstruction conditions after completion of the proposed project.

As previously discussed, the project would be larger than the existing Blythe BPS; it would include more inspection lanes, more buildings, canopies for shade and energy, more parking, larger signage, and site landscaping. However, the colors and shapes of the buildings and site features, including landscaping, have been designed with a “River to Farm” theme to be consistent with and sensitive to the natural environment and visual character of this gateway location between the Colorado River and cultivated agricultural lands.

As the project’s location is determined by its primary function—to inspect vehicles entering California—its location just west of the California/Arizona state line is a site where the public expects to encounter the facilities and the features required for an inspection facility. Although the project will include more and larger buildings, canopies, and ancillary features than what is within the existing BPS station, the buildings will be finished with earth tones so that they complement the agricultural uses in the project area. The proposed facility would not block views of the distant mountain range. Public views to and from the relocated BPS would be of limited duration and would not mask or conflict with overall agricultural character of the project area and would generally be consistent with viewer expectations for the facility’s intended use.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. As such, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant

The existing sources of light and glare at the project site and in the nearby vicinity primarily include the existing BPS and headlights/taillights of vehicles traveling along I-10, Hobsonway, and East Donlon Street. Other nearby sources of light and glare include the nearby RV resort, mobile home park, and rural residential uses. The project would be larger than the existing Blythe BPS and therefore would introduce additional lighting to the area. However, the proposed project would be consistent with the existing land use and new sources of light associated with the project would not be substantial in the context of existing lighting sources. Additionally, lighting is required to be arranged to reflect away from adjoining properties or any public way and so as not to cause a nuisance either to highway traffic or to the living environment per Chapter 17.28.030 of the City of Blythe Zoning Ordinance. A lighting plan would be required for the proposed project which identifies the location of lights, and shielding mechanisms to be employed to avoid the production of glare, minimize light spill, and avoid the spread of stray light across the project site boundaries. Daytime glare would not be substantial as no highly-reflective glass elements are proposed as part of the proposed project. The proposed project would therefore not create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. As such, impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry 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 forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Community Impact Assessment[2]. This section analyzes potential impacts to agricultural land and agricultural uses. There is no forest land, timberland, or related uses or any land zoned as forest land, timberland or related uses in or near the Project site. Therefore, there is no further discussion regarding forest land or timberland in this section.

The proposed project is within the City of Blythe, which is in Riverside County. Agricultural production is one of Riverside County's largest industries in terms of dollar value; it provides important employment opportunities and is an important part of the County's history and character.[3] Agriculture is also important to the economy and character of the City of Blythe.

[2] LSA Associates, Inc. 2022a. Community Impact Assessment, Blythe Border Protection Station Project. July.

[3] County of Riverside. 2021. County of Riverside General Plan, Land Use Element. Website: https://planning.rctlma.org/General-Plan-Zoning/General-Plan (accessed November 10, 2022).

In 2020, approximately 9,700 acres, which is more than half of the total acreage of Blythe (17,520 acres), was in agricultural production[4]. The project area is approximately 183 acres, approximately 60 percent of which is agricultural land. The project footprint will occupy approximately 35 acres within the larger 183-acre project area. Approximately 32 of the 35 acres are designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. None of the farmland within the 183-acre project area is under a Williamson Act Contract.

The California Department of Conservation (DOC) oversees the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) to provide maps and statistical data that can be used for analyzing impact on California's agricultural resources. The FMMP using a classification system that combines technical soil ratings and current land use as the basis for rating and mapping farmland. The maps are updated every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance. For environmental review under CEQA, the categories of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance are collectively referred to as Agricultural land or Farmland.

a) Less Than Significant

Table 3.2.1 contains the total acreage of Farmland, as designated by the DOC and the USDA, which would be directly impacted by proposed project (refer to **Figure 3.2-1**).

Table 3.2.1: Impacts to Farmland

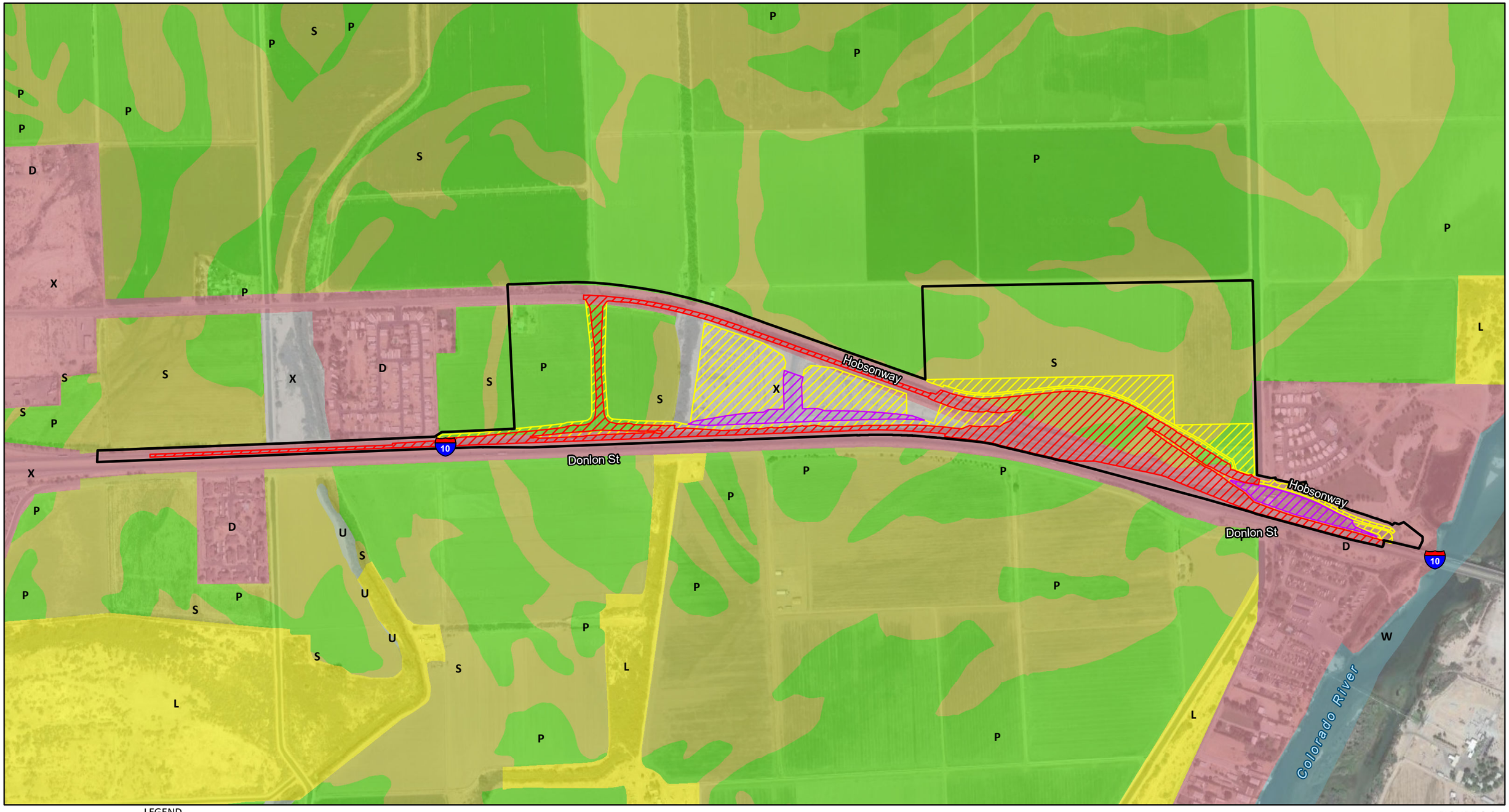
Project Impact	Prime and Unique Farmland (acres)	Farmland of Statewide Importance (acres)	Total (acres)
Temporary	5.94	10.03	15.97
Permanent	16.83	15.24	32.07

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (December 2022)

The proposed project would temporarily impact 15.97 acres of Farmland during construction, primarily for construction staging areas. The proposed project would permanently impact 32.07 acres of Farmland, including 16.83 acres of Prime Farmland and 15.24 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance to accommodate the relocated BPS facility and the relocated portion of Hobsonway.

Farmland temporarily impacted by construction activities would be restored and returned to agricultural use after construction of the proposed project is complete. Therefore, temporary impacts to Farmland would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

[4] United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2020. CropScape – Cropland Data Layer. Natural Agricultural Statistics Service. Website: https://nassgeodata.gmu.edu/CropScape/ (accessed January 14, 2022).



LEGEND

- Project Boundary

Impact Areas

- Permanent
- Permanent (future City reuse)
- Temporary

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (2018)

- P - Prime Farmland
- S - Farmland of Statewide Importance
- U - Unique Farmland
- L - Farmland of Local Importance
- D - Urban and Built-Up Land
- X - Other Land
- W - Water

0 375 750
FEET

SOURCE: Google Imagery (2022), California Dept of Conservation Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program (2018)

I:\DGS1801.05\GIS\MXD\Farmlands\FMMP Categories and Impacts.mxd (11/15/2022)

FIGURE 3.2-1

Blythe Food and Agricultural Inspection Station

FMMP Categories and Impacts

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Construction of the relocated BPS facility and Hobsonway would permanently convert 32.07 acres of Farmland, including 16.83 acres of Prime Farmland and 15.24 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, along the north side of the current alignment of Hobsonway, east of the existing BPS facility, and at the realigned Hobsonway I-10 connector road and on- and off-ramps. A majority of the impacts to agricultural lands on the north side of the current alignment of Hobsonway and east of the existing BPS facility would occur alongside the existing roadways and therefore, converting Farmlands to a non-agricultural use would not significantly affect agricultural production or viability of the existing agricultural operations. The Hobsonway I-10 connector would be developed through a parcel that is currently designated as Prime Farmland. However, a majority of the proposed alignment of the new Hobsonway I-10 connector road would be constructed on an existing dirt road between two agricultural fields. Therefore, although the proposed project would convert Prime Farmland to a non-agricultural use, the two agricultural fields would not be permanently impacted by the new Hobsonway 1-10 connector road.

Form AD-1006 uses a point-based approach to assess the relative value of the farmland that is subject to the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). The purpose of the FPPA is to minimize the extent to which federal activities contribute to the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses. It also seeks to ensure that federal programs are administered in a manner to be compatible with State, local, and private efforts to protect farmland. DGS, in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), completed Form AD-1006 in December 2021. The final score for the proposed project was 83. According to the instructions for completing Form AD-1006, for project sites in which the total points equal or exceed 160, alternative actions, as appropriate, should be considered to reduce adverse impacts to farmland. Based on total point calculated on Form AD-1006, the proposed project would not have a substantial impact on farmlands, and no further analysis is necessary to ensure that farmlands are protected per the requirements of the FPPA.

Because the conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use would not significantly affect existing agricultural production or existing agricultural operations, impacts associated with the conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

The project site is zoned Medium to Low Density Residential (R-M-L), General Commercial, Commercial Office, Neighborhood Commercial, Public/Quasi-Public, and Open Space. None of the lands within the project site are zoned for agricultural uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use and there would be **no impacts** associated with conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use. No mitigation is required.

The project site does not contain land that is under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on land under a Williamson Act contract and there would be **no impacts** associated with land under a Williamson Act contract. No mitigation is required.

c) No Impact

The Project site is zoned Medium to Low Density Residential (R-M-L), General Commercial, Commercial Office, Neighborhood Commercial, Public/Quasi-Public, and Open Space. None of the lands within the project site are zoned for as 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)). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for forest resources and there would be **no impacts** associated with conflicts with existing zoning for forest uses. No mitigation is required.

d) No Impact

The Project site is not occupied by forest land. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use and there would be **no impacts** associated with the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to a non-forest use**.** No mitigation is required.

e) Less Than Significant

The proposed project would not disrupt existing agricultural operations in the project area and therefore would not instigate the conversion of surrounding Farmland to a nonagricultural use. Furthermore, the proposed project would not require restrictions or limitations on nearby growers such as limiting the use of water, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides on crops; or restrictions on noise, burning, and dust that would result in conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use.

California's BPSs serve the vitally important purpose of providing border safety and protection actions, including inspection facilities, to prevent the entry of noxious, diseased, or invasive pest/species into California. Because the proposed project would prevent the entry of invasive species that could destroy agricultural crops, which would both harm California's agricultural economy and indirectly convert agricultural land to a non-agricultural use, implementation of the proposed project would constitute a beneficial effect and would help prevent the conversion of Farmland to a non-agricultural use. Therefore, the proposed project would not involve other changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use and impacts involving other changes in the existing environment would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.3 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.

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

The discussion and analysis provided below is based on the data included in the Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report[5].

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is required to designate areas of the state as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for all State standards. An attainment designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations did not violate the standard for that pollutant in that area. A nonattainment designation indicates that a pollutant concentration violated the standard at least once, excluding those occasions when a violation was caused by an exceptional event, as defined in the criteria. An unclassified designation signifies that data do not support either an attainment or nonattainment status. The California Clean Air Act (CCAA) divides districts into moderate, serious, and severe air pollution categories, with increasingly stringent control requirements mandated for each category.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency designates areas for ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) as either does not meet the primary standards, or cannot be classified, or better than national standards. For sulfur dioxide (SO_2) areas are designated as does not meet the primary standards, does not meet the secondary standards, cannot be classified, or better than national standards.

Table 3.3.1 provides a summary of the attainment status for the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB) with respect to national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) and California ambient air quality standards (CAAQS).

[5] LSA Associates, Inc. 2023a. Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report. January.

Table 3.3.1: Attainment Status of Criteria Pollutants in the Mojave Desert Air Basin

Pollutant	State	Federal
O_3 1 hour	Nonattainment: Moderate	Not Applicable[1]
O_3 8 hour	Nonattainment	Nonattainment: Moderate
PM_{10}	Nonattainment	Nonattainment: Moderate
$PM_{2.5}$	Nonattainment	Unclassified/attainment
CO	Attainment	Attainment
NO_2	Attainment/unclassified	Attainment/unclassified
SO_2	Attainment/unclassified	Attainment/Unclassified
Lead	Attainment	Attainment1

Source: California Air Resources Board (2016) Website: http://www.arb.ca.gov/desig/desig.htm; (accessed December 2022).
[1] The Environmental Protection Agency revoked their 1-hour ozone standard in 2005 to pursue the more health-protective 8-hour ozone standard. The meaning of revoke is to annul by recalling or taking back.
CO = carbon monoxide
NO_2 = nitrogen dioxide
O_3 = ozone
PM_{10} = particulate matter less than 10 microns in size
$PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in size
SO_2 = sulfur dioxide

a) No Impact

A consistency determination plays an essential role in local agency project review by linking local planning and unique individual projects to the air quality plans. A consistency determination fulfills the CEQA goal of fully informing local agency decision-makers of the environmental costs of the project under consideration at a stage early enough to ensure that air quality concerns are addressed. Only new or amended General Plan elements, Specific Plans, and significantly unique projects need to undergo a consistency review due to the air quality plan strategy being based on projections from local General Plans.

As identified above, all areas designated as nonattainment under the CCAA are required to prepare plans showing how they will meet the air quality standards. The most recent air quality plans are the PM_{10} Attainment Demonstration and Attainment Plan and the O_3 Attainment Plan. The attainment plans are based on regional growth projections developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The Project would include the development of three inspection canopies; two inspection buildings, a main vehicle inspection building, a commercial truck inspection building; and a parking area. The Project would not house more than 1,000 persons, occupy more than 40 acres of land, or encompass more than 650,000 sf of floor area. Thus, the Project would not be defined as a regionally significant project under CEQA; therefore, it does not meet SCAG's Intergovernmental Review criteria.

Additionally, as discussed below, the regional emissions generated by construction and operation phases of the Project would be less than the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) emissions thresholds, and MDAQMD would not consider the project a substantial source of air pollutant emissions that would have the potential to affect the attainment designations in the air basin. Therefore, the Project would not affect the regional emissions inventory or conflict with strategies in the applicable air quality plans. **No impact** would occur; therefore, no mitigation is required.

b) Less Than Significant

The MDAB is designated as nonattainment for O_3 and particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or smaller (PM_{10}) for federal standards and nonattainment for O_3, PM_{10}, and particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or smaller ($PM_{2.5}$) for State standards. The MDAB's nonattainment status is attributed to the region's development history. Past,

present, and future development projects contribute to the region's adverse air quality impacts on a cumulative basis. By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. No single project is sufficient in size to, by itself, result in nonattainment of ambient air quality standards. Instead, a project's individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts. If a project's contribution to the cumulative impact is considerable, then the project's impact on air quality would be considered significant.

In developing thresholds of significance for air pollutants, the MDAQMD considered the emission levels for which a project's individual emissions would be cumulatively considerable. If a project exceeds the identified significance thresholds, its emissions would be cumulatively considerable, resulting in significant adverse air quality impacts to the region's existing air quality conditions. Therefore, additional analysis to assess cumulative impacts is unnecessary. The following analysis assesses the potential project-level construction- and operation-related air quality impacts.

Short-term Construction Emissions. The Project will be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 will include the relocation of Hobsonway and associated utility relocations and is scheduled to start in November of 2024 and be completed in January of 2026. All other work will be completed in Phase 2, which is scheduled to start construction in July of 2026 and end in December 2027. The total duration for the two phases combined would be approximately 2.5 years. Thus, construction activities are not anticipated to last more than five years.

Site preparation and roadway construction would involve clearing, cut-and-fill activities, grading, and paving surfaces for roadways, parking areas, and inspection activities (e.g., boat wash areas). During construction, short-term degradation of air quality is expected from the release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and other activities related to construction. Emissions from construction equipment powered by gasoline and diesel engines are also anticipated and would include CO, nitrogen oxide (NO_x), volatile organic compounds, directly emitted PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$, and toxic air contaminants such as diesel particulate matter. Construction activities are expected to increase traffic congestion in the area, resulting in temporary increases in emissions from traffic. These emissions would be temporary and limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site.

Under the transportation conformity regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 93.123(c)(5)), construction-related activities that cause temporary increases in emissions are not required to complete a hot-spot analysis. These temporary increases in emissions are those that occur only during the construction phase and last five years or less at any individual site. They typically fall into two main categories:

- *Fugitive Dust:* A major emission from construction due to ground disturbance. All air districts and the California Health and Safety Code (Sections 41700–41701) prohibit "visible emissions" exceeding three minutes in one hour; this applies not only to dust, but also to engine exhaust. In general, this is interpreted as visible emissions crossing the right-of-way line.

  Sources of fugitive dust include disturbed soils at the construction site and trucks carrying uncovered loads of soils. Unless properly controlled, vehicles leaving the site may deposit mud on local streets, which could be an additional source of airborne dust after it dries. PM_{10} emissions may vary from day to day, depending on the nature and

magnitude of construction activity and local weather conditions. PM_{10} emissions depend on soil moisture, silt content of soil, wind speed, and the amount of equipment operating. Larger dust particles would settle near the source, whereas fine particles would be dispersed over greater distances from the construction site.

- *Construction Equipment Emissions:* Diesel exhaust particulate matter is a California-identified toxic air contaminant and localized issues may exist if diesel-powered construction equipment is operated near sensitive receptors.

The construction emissions were estimated for the Project using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod). Table 3.3.2 represents the maximum amount of construction-related emissions during a peak construction day (model data are provided in Appendix A of the Air Quality Report). The emissions presented below are based on the best information available at the time of calculations and specify that the two-phase construction schedule for the Project is anticipated to take approximately 31 months, beginning in 2024. Demolition of the existing Blythe BPS will be part of the last phase of construction, at which point, vehicles will be diverted to the new Blythe BPS. As shown in Table 3.3-2, emissions during construction would not exceed the MDAQMD thresholds. Additionally, the MDAQMD has established rules for reducing fugitive dust emissions. Implementation of the measures in Rule 403 during construction would result in a 50 percent reduction of fugitive dust emissions as a result of watering and associated dust-control measures. With the implementation of **measures AQ-1 through AQ-5,** which include implementation of MDAQMD Rule 403 and Caltrans Standard Construction Measures (see below), fugitive dust and exhaust emissions from construction activities associated with the Project would not result in any adverse air quality impacts.

Table 3.3.2: Short-Term Regional Construction Emissions

Construction Phase	Total Regional Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	VOCs	**NO_X**	**CO**	**SO_X**	**PM_{10}[1]**	**$PM_{2.5}$[2]**
Demolition	2	23	21	<1	5	1
Site Preparation	3	25	18	<1	9	1
Grading	3	36	29	<1	6	1
Building Construction	2	21	21	<1	2	<1
Architectural Coating	16	1	2	<1	<1	<1
Paving	1	9	15	<1	<1	<1
Peak Daily Emissions	**18**[1]	**36**	**29**	**<1**	**21**	**11**
MDAQMD Thresholds	**137**	**137**	**548**	**137**	**82**	**65**
Exceeds Emissions Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (December 2022).
Note: It was assumed Architectural Coatings would be applied during the Building Construction phase.

[1] Maximum emissions of VOCs occur during the overlapping Building Construction (2 VOCs) and Architectural Coating (16 VOCs) phases for a total peak VOC of 18.

[2] Fugitive PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions shown include the application of MDAQMD Rule 403 standard measures.

CO = carbon monoxide
lbs/day = pounds per day
NO_X = nitrogen oxides
$PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in size
PM_{10} = particulate matter less than 10 microns in size
MDAQMD = Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
SO_X = sulfur oxides
VOCs = volatile organic compounds

The following measures will be implemented during construction activities.

AQ-1 **Fugitive Dust.** During all earth disturbance activities, excessive fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering or other dust preventive measures using the following procedures, as specified in the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) Rule 403. The disturbance area shall be minimized to the greatest extent practicable to prevent excessive amounts of dust. All material excavated or graded shall be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive amounts of dust. Watering shall occur at least twice daily with complete coverage, preferably in the late morning and after work is done for the day. All material transported on site or off site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust. Visible dust beyond the property line emanating from the Project will be prevented to the maximum extent feasible. These control techniques shall be included as part of Project plan specifications.

AQ-2 **Hauling of Excavated Materials.** During construction activities, all trucks that are used to haul excavated or graded material on site shall comply with State Vehicle Code Section 23114, with special attention to Sections 23114(b)(F), (e)(2), and (e)(4), as amended, as the code relates to the prevention of such material spilling onto public streets and roads.

AQ-3 **Caltrans Air Quality Standard Construction Specifications.** Throughout the construction of the Project, the contractor shall adhere to Sections 14.9-02, 14-9.03, and 14-9.05 of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Standard Specifications for Construction.

AQ-4 **Equipment Maintenance.** During Project construction, ozone precursor emissions from construction equipment vehicles shall be controlled by maintaining equipment engines in good condition and in proper tune per manufacturers' specifications.

AQ-5 **Vehicle Idling.** During Project construction, all construction vehicles, both on and off site, shall be prohibited from idling in excess of 5 minutes.

Long-term Operational Emissions. The purpose of the Project is to relocate the existing Blythe BPS to provide a facility that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities and to a location that improves traffic operations along westbound I-10.

Although the Project will increase the capacity of the BPS itself, the capacity of I-10 mainline and nearby ramps will not change. In addition, the traffic volumes in the area are expected to be the same in the future with or without the Project. Therefore, the Project will not result in a substantial increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT)[6]. Therefore, the Project would have no long-term regional vehicle air emission impacts.

[6] Psomas. 2022a. Preliminary Traffic Analysis: Traffic Forecasting, Methodology, and Volumes. September

The Project will include the development of three inspection canopies; two inspection buildings, a main vehicle inspection building and a commercial truck inspection building; and a parking area. An approximately 100-kilowatt solar array will be developed to provide electricity to the Project. The Project will also include an emergency generator, an incinerator, and a watercraft washing area.

The main vehicle inspection building will be approximately 4,200 gross square feet and will include a lobby and office space, locker facilities, small meeting room, work room, equipment rooms, a kitchen/break room, restrooms, and storage areas. The approximately 2,900 sf commercial vehicle inspection building will provide lobby and office space, a multipurpose room, storage areas, and restrooms. Both inspection buildings will be developed and equipped to accommodate CDFA staff and operations, as well as other visiting cooperative State agency personnel (e.g., CHP, CalRecycle) using and/or assigned to the BPS for temporary operations. The inspection buildings will be designed with modern, non-glare materials.

Long-term operation of the BPS facility would result in air pollutant emissions associated with mobile sources (e.g., vehicle trips), energy sources (e.g., electricity and natural gas), area sources (e.g., architectural coatings and the use of landscape maintenance equipment), and stationary sources (an emergency generator and an incinerator). CalEEMod provides numerous land use types to represent projects. The land use type that best represents the Project is the “automotive service center” land use selection. While the Project doesn’t include automotive services, it does have similar electricity, natural gas, and water use. Thus, the automotive service center land use type was used to represent both the existing and proposed BPS. CalEEMod defaults were used for all other parameters except the assumption that there are currently 10 employees and there would be 20 employees at the new BPS. The new BPS emergency generator was assumed to be compressed natural gas (CNG) powered, approximately 400 horsepower, and operated for one hour per month for routine testing/maintenance, and the incinerator emissions were assumed to be similar to the CalEEMod parameters for a CNG-fired boiler. The BPS facility operational emissions are shown in Table 3.3.3 and indicate the Project would not exceed the MDAQMD’s regional pollutant thresholds.

CO Hot Spot Analysis. Areas of vehicle congestion have the potential to create pockets of CO called hot spots. These pockets have the potential to exceed the State 1-hour standard of 20 parts per million (ppm) or the 8-hour standard of 9 ppm. In 2007, the MDAB was designated in attainment for CO under both the CAAQS and the NAAQS. Based on the findings of the Air Quality Report, the Project is exempt for CO hot-spot analysis and would not result in a localized CO impact.

Based on the analysis presented above regarding short term construction emissions, long term operational emissions, and CO hot spot analysis, the Project would have a **less than significant** impact relative to a cumulative considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainable under an applicable federal or State ambient air quality standard. No mitigation is required.

Table 3.3.3: Regional Emissions from BPS Operation

Emissions Source	Total Regional Pollutant Emissions (lbs/day)					
	VOCs	NO_X	CO	SO_X	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Existing Operations	**<1**	**<1**	**<1**	**<1**	**<1**	**<1**
Project Operations						
Area Sources	1	<1	<1	0	<1	<1
Energy Sources	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Mobile Sources	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Stationary Sources	4	<1	11	<1	<1	<1
Peak Daily Emissions	**5**	**<1**	**11**	**<1**	**<1**	**<1**
Net Change in Daily Emissions	**5**	**<1**	**11**	**<1**	**<1**	**<1**
MDAQMD Thresholds	**137**	**137**	**548**	**137**	**82**	**65**
Exceeds Emissions Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, inc. (December 2022).
BPS = Border Protection Station
CO = carbon monoxide
lbs/day = pounds per day
NO_X = nitrogen oxides
$PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in size
PM_{10} = particulate matter less than 10 microns in size
MDAQMD = Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
SO_X = sulfur oxides
VOCs = volatile organic compounds

c) Less Than Significant

Sensitive populations (sensitive receptors) are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution than the general population. Sensitive populations near localized sources of toxics and CO are of particular concern. Land uses considered to be sensitive receptors include residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, athletic facilities, long-term healthcare facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, and retirement homes. Sensitive land uses located adjacent to the study area include single-family residences and recreational vehicle (RV) resorts. Table 3.3.4 presents the list of sensitive receptors' locations and distances from the Project.

Table 3.3.4: List of Sensitive Receptors near the Project Site and Their Locations and Distance

Sensitive Receptors	Location	Nearest Distance to Project Site (feet)
Residences	Blythe Marina Estates	133
Residences (short-term)	The Cove RV Resort	280
Residences (short-term)	Arizona Oasis RV Resort	1,600

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (2022).

As shown in Table 3.3.2, above, project construction pollutant emissions will be well below the MDAQMD significance thresholds. In addition, with the implementation of **measures AQ-1 through AQ-5**, which include implementation of MDAQMD Rule 403 and Caltrans Standard Construction Measures, fugitive dust and exhaust emissions from construction activities associated with the Project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

The Hazardous Building Material Survey report[7] and the Aerially Deposited Lead Survey and Limited Site Investigation report[8] examined the existing structure and soil for asbestos

[7] Ninyo & Moore. 2020a. Hazardous Building Material Survey.
[8] Ninyo & Moore. 2020b. Aerially Deposited Lead Survey and Limited Site Investigation.

and lead. Asbestos and lead were found in the structure, but none were found in the soil. This is a potentially significant health risk to construction workers during demolition of the existing BPS. With implementation of **measures HAZ-2 and HAZ-3**, which prescribe asbestos and lead control measures to be implemented prior to, during, and following construction, potentially significant health risks from asbestos and lead emissions would be reduced to **less than significant**.

Therefore, the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations from either construction equipment (e.g., diesel-fueled vehicles and equipment) or airborne particulates during project construction would be **less than significant**.

Table 3.3.3, above, identifies the operational emissions of CO, NO_x, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$, respectively, and demonstrates that all concentrations of pollutants would be below the MDAQMD thresholds of significance for operation of the project. Therefore, the project would not be a source of substantial pollutant emissions. Sensitive receptors are not expected to be exposed to substantial pollutant concentrations during project operation, thus impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant

During project construction, some odors may be present due to diesel exhaust. The Project would not include any activities or operations that would generate objectionable odors and, once operational, the project would not be a source of odors.

Measures AQ-1 through AQ-5 require the project applicant to implement standard control measures to limit construction equipment emissions. These temporary emissions are expected to be isolated to the immediate vicinity of the construction site. Furthermore, these odors would be temporary and limited to the construction period.

Land uses generally associated with long-term objectionable odors include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food-processing plants, chemical plants, composting operations, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding facilities. The Project would include the development of three inspection canopies; two inspection buildings, a main vehicle inspection building and a commercial truck inspection building; trash enclosures; and a parking area. Trash would be removed at regular intervals as to avoid significant odor emissions. Additional activities associated with the project would not be a source of odors. Thus, the Project would not include any activities or operations that would generate objectionable odors and once operational, the project would not be a source of odors.

Compliance with mandated regulatory policies designed to reduce emissions from construction equipment and materials and medium and heavy-duty freight vehicles, would ensure that the project would not involve short-term or long-term emissions or sources of odors that could affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, impacts associated with other emissions, such as those leading to odors, which would adversely affect a substantial number of people would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.4 Biological Resources

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

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Natural Environment Study[9] and Aquatic Resources Delineation Report[10] prepared for the proposed project.

For the purpose of the Biological Resources section, the project area is referred to as the Biological Study Area (BSA), which encompasses 183.8 acres, including the project footprint and adjacent areas that may directly or indirectly be affected by the project. Surrounding land uses include agriculture, rural-residential, mobile home/trailer facilities, water and transportation infrastructure, and park space. The BSA is dominated by agricultural land, developed areas, and disturbed habitat. The dominant land use cover type within the BSA consists of agricultural land, which occupies approximately 98.5 acres within the BSA and includes cultivated areas and associated dirt roads. The second most prominent land use cover type consists of disturbed habitat (44.4 acres), which is characterized by current and historical human use, followed by developed areas (25.5 acres) which is characterized by residences, buildings, and paved roads, including I-10. The most biologically diverse area

[9] Blackhawk Environmental. 2022a. Natural Environment Study, Blythe Border Protection Station Project. November.

[10] Blackhawk Environmental. 2022b. Blythe Border Protection Station Project Aquatic Resources Delineation Report. August 16.

within the BSA is within an unnamed man-made drainage channel that runs through the western side of the project site at the Hobsonway/I-10 interchange improvement area (hereinafter referred to as Drainage 1). Drainage 1 is dominated by dense arrowweed scrub on the upper banks surrounding an emergent freshwater marsh, Goodding's willow forest, and tamarisk scrub toward the lower portions.

a) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The Natural Environment Study identified a total of 26 special-status species under the jurisdiction of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service, and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) that have been recorded within a 5-mile vicinity of the BSA. This includes 6 special-status plant species and 20 special-status animal species, 4 of which are federally listed and six which are State-listed species.

Special-Status Plant Species. No special-status plant species were observed in the BSA; however, six special-status plant species have a low potential to occur in limited areas of the BSA (Harwood's milk-vetch, Abrams' spurge, bitter hymenoxys, California satintail, desert beardtongue, and dwarf germander). Suitable growing conditions for each of these species are largely relegated to non-agricultural areas and undeveloped portions of the BSA. None of these species were observed during the field surveys. The majority of the BSA is subjected to consistent maintenance and disturbance activities (i.e., agricultural operations, roadway maintenance) that likely preclude these species from occurring within the project site. Therefore, with only limited habitat available for these species, each is considered to have a low potential to occur within the BSA.

Despite having low potential to occur in the BSA, if Harwood's milk-vetch, Abrams' spurge, bitter hymenoxys, California satintail, desert beardtongue, and/or dwarf germander are present at the BSA, demolition and construction activities associated with the project could affect these species. Therefore, implementation of **measure BIO-1** would be required, which requires preconstruction surveys for special-status plant species. With implementation of **measure BIO-1**, impacts to special-status plant species would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

Special-Status Animal Species. Special-status animal species that are known to occur or have a potential to occur in the BSA and have suitable habitat present within the BSA include the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia)*, mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), gila woodpecker (*Melanerpes uropygialis*), elf owl (*Micrathene whitneyi*), vermillion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus obscurus*), Yuma Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus yumanensis*), Sonoran yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia sonorana*), crissal thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*), western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), western yellow bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Arizona myotis (*Myotis occultus*), cave myotis (*Myotis velifer*), pocketed free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops femorosaccus*), and Colorado River cotton rat (*Sigmodon arizonae plenus*).

One special-status animal species was observed in the BSA (first-year vermilion flycatcher) and one special-status animal species has a moderate potential to occur (burrowing owl). All other evaluated special-status animal species either have low potential to occur or are considered absent.

Vermillion Flycatcher. The vermillion flycatcher nests in cottonwood, willow, mesquite, and other vegetation in desert and semi-arid riparian habitats adjacent to irrigated fields, irrigation ditches, park spaces, golf courses, and pastures. While there is suitable habitat for vermillion flycatcher within the BSA, there is no suitable habitat at the Project site that would be impacted by construction and operation of the Project. Therefore, no mitigation is required.

Burrowing Owls. Burrowing owls have a moderate potential to occur on the project site. There are 45 California Natural Diversity Database occurrences within five miles of the project site but limited suitable habitat is present on and/or adjacent to the project site. Peripheral edges of agricultural fields, fill slopes along I-10 and other roadways within the project site, broken asphalt and concrete along roadways, and canal edges offer limited suitable nesting habitat. Due to the presence of suitable habitat for burrowing owls, demolition and construction activities associated with the project could affect this species and implementation of **measure BIO-8** would be required to avoid and/or minimize impacts to burrowing owls. Measures include the completion of burrowing owl breeding season surveys and implementing avoidance and exclusion measures if burrowing owls are observed occupying the project site and/or within 150 meters (approximately 500 feet) of the project site.

Although a majority of the special-status plant and animal species that are known to or have the potential to occur in the project site are low, given the presence of suitable habitat for special status plant and animal species, implementation of **measures BIO-2 through BIO-7** would be required to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to special status species caused by demolition and construction activities associated with the project. Measures include general avoidance and minimization efforts including the completion of an environmental training session for construction and maintenance personnel; the presence of a monitor on-site to ensure compliance with all avoidance and minimization measures; identification of locations for the placement of Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing by a qualified biologist; completion of a survey of the work area for special-status species immediately before initial ground disturbance and/or vegetation clearing; monitoring during vegetation removal, initial grading, and other ground-disturbing activities by a qualified biologist for reptiles and other small wildlife; the completion of vegetation removal during the non-breeding season for birds; surveying for suitable nesting habitat within 100 feet of the limits of work by a qualified biologist; and minimizing the number of access routes, number and size of staging areas, and total area of the activity to the minimum amount feasible.

With the implementation of **measures BIO-1 through BIO-8**, the proposed project would have a **less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated** on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS.

BIO-1 **Special-Status Plant Species Survey**. Prior to construction, a preconstruction survey for special-status plant species shall be conducted within suitable habitat within the Project footprint. The survey shall be conducted within the peak bloom periods for each species. If special-status plant species are identified with the project footprint, CDFW shall be consulted to determine the appropriate compensatory mitigation. Compensatory mitigation may include on-site or off-site restoration, seed salvage and reseeding, mitigation bank credit purchases and/or a separate CDFW approved mitigation strategy.

BIO-2 **Environmental Training Session**. Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct an environmental training session for all construction and maintenance personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the special-status species that may occur within the Project footprint, their habitat requirements, and the measures that are being implemented to avoid and/or minimize impacts to these species. The environmental training shall include a discussion of the boundaries within which the workers and equipment must remain.

BIO-3 **Qualified Biologist/Biological Monitor.** During construction, a qualified biologist shall be present at the work site until initial ground-disturbing activities in all portions of the Project site have been completed. After this time, the contractor shall designate a monitor who shall ensure on-site compliance with all avoidance and minimization efforts when the qualified biologist is not on site. The qualified biologist will ensure that the monitor is familiar with the avoidance and minimization measures and is able to identify all the special-status species that could potentially occur within the Project footprint. The monitor and the qualified biologist shall have the authority to halt any action that might result in impacts that exceed the levels anticipated by the USFWS and/or the CDFW. If work is stopped, the qualified biologist or the on-site monitor shall immediately notify the Project engineer. The Project engineer shall notify Caltrans. If a federally listed species is found in the work area during construction and a Biological Opinion has not been issued for the Project, the qualified biologist must stop work and immediately notify Caltrans. Caltrans shall then consult with the USFWS and shall then advise the contractor on how to proceed. The Caltrans shall contact the CDFW.

BIO-4 **ESA Fencing**. Prior to the start of construction, the qualified biologist shall identify locations for the placement of ESA fencing along the limits of the work area to keep construction equipment and personnel out of potentially sensitive wildlife habitats (e.g., burrowing owl-occupied areas, active bird nest sites, Arrowweed Scrub, Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Brittlebush Scrub, Bush Seepweed Scrub, Freshwater Marsh, Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest, Tamarisk Scrub). The Construction Contractor, with the assistance of the qualified biologist, shall install the ESA fencing prior to construction activities. The qualified biologist shall verify the correct placement and installation of the ESA fences before work begins in the area.

BIO-5 **Special Status Animal Species**. Prior to initial ground disturbance and/or vegetation clearing, the qualified biologist shall conduct a survey of the work area for special-status animal species. If special-status animal species are found, they will be allowed to leave the work area on their own, or if approved by the USFWS and/or CDFW, they will be relocated by the qualified biologist to a safe place outside the work area.

BIO-6 **Nesting Birds**. The Construction Contractor shall avoid vegetation removal and trimming during the breeding season for birds (i.e., between February 15 and August 31) to the extent practicable. This shall discourage birds from nesting in construction areas and shall greatly reduce the potential for nesting birds to delay the construction schedule. If vegetation removal and trimming

cannot be avoided during the breeding season, then the following measures shall be implemented:

- All suitable nesting habitat within 50 feet of the work limits shall be surveyed by a qualified biologist no more than 14 days prior to ground-disturbing/vegetation removal activities and again within 2 days (48 hours) of such activities. Areas outside the public right-of-way (ROW) shall not be surveyed for active nests unless such areas are visible from the public ROW.

- If an active nest is found, a qualified biologist shall delineate an appropriate buffer using plastic construction fencing (ESA fencing), pin flags, or other easily identified fencing material. If necessary, the biologist shall consult with the USFWS and/or CDFW to determine an appropriate buffer size. Typically, buffers range from 250 to 500 feet, depending on the species and the location of the nest. However, smaller buffers have been accepted depending on the species, nest location, surrounding habitat, and the nature of the adjacent construction activity. During construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct regular monitoring (at CDFW approved intervals) to evaluate the nest for potential disturbances associated with construction activities. Construction within the buffer shall be prohibited until the qualified biologist determines the nest is no longer active.

- If an active nest is found after completion of the preconstruction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities in the nest vicinity shall stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected an appropriate buffer around the nest. If establishment of the buffer is not feasible, the USFWS and/or CDFW shall be contacted for further avoidance and minimization guidelines.

BIO-7 **Access Routes**. Prior to construction, the number of access routes, number and size of staging areas, and the total area of construction activity shall be determined and limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the Project goal. Routes and boundaries shall be clearly demarcated both on plans and in the field.

BIO-8 **Burrowing Owl Surveys.** Between February 15 and July 15, a qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys in known and suitable habitat areas for burrowing owls and within 150 meters (492 feet) from suitable habitat. At least one survey visit shall occur between February 15 and April 15 and at least three survey visits shall occur between April 15 and July 15, with at least one visit after June 15.

Additionally, two take avoidance burrowing owl surveys shall be completed. One survey shall be completed 14–30 days prior to ground-disturbing and/or vegetation clearing activities and one survey shall be completed within 24 hours in known and suitable habitat areas proposed for Project-related impacts and within 150 meters (492 feet) from suitable habitat proposed for Project-related impacts.

If burrowing owls are observed to occupy the Project site and/or adjacent areas within 150 meters (492 feet) during take avoidance surveys or incidentally during construction, the State of California and other pertinent parties shall be notified, and avoidance measures shall be implemented during the peak breeding season (February 15 through July 15). If burrowing owls are present during the non-peak breeding season (July 16 through February 14), and active nesting is not occurring, burrowing owl exclusion measures shall be implemented in accordance with CEQA and with CDFW concurrence on an accepted exclusion approach methodology.

b) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

The following sensitive natural communities[11] occur within the BSA: Arrowweed Scrub (arrowweed thickets), Bush Seepweed Scrub, and Goodding's Willow Forest. Construction of the new on- and off-ramps for I-10 would result in a total of 0.71 acre of permanent impacts and 4.087 acres of temporary impacts to these sensitive natural communities, as shown in Table 3.4.1, below. Furthermore, the Project would result in minor impacts to CDFW Jurisdictional Riparian Habitat due to the extension of the existing culvert and the creation of a new partial headwall associated with proposed Hobsonway on-ramp and I-10 improvements. As shown in Table 3.4.2, the Project would result in 0.024 acre of permanent impacts and 0.076 acre of temporary impacts to CDFW jurisdictional riparian habitat. Because the Project would result in permanent and temporary impacts to CDFW jurisdictional riparian habitat and sensitive natural communities, implementation of **measures BIO-4 and BIO-9 through BIO-14** would be required, which entail the placement of ESA fencing to prohibit activities within sensitive natural communities; implementation of a CDFW approved Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan; the purchase of mitigation bank credits; facilitating regrowth in temporarily impacted areas; implementation of best management practices (BMP) during construction; restricting work within the streambed to the low-flow season between June 15 and October 15; restricting heavy equipment to the work area; returning temporarily impacted riparian areas to its original contour and condition to the greatest extent possible; removing all constructed ramps, construction mats, and other temporary material used for construction from riparian areas; and refueling, maintaining, and storing construction equipment at least 100 feet from the riparian canopy boundary.

Table 3.4.1: Summary of Impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities

Sensitive Natural Community Type	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)
Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed	0.024	3.44
Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest	--	0.012
Bush Seepweed Scrub	0.686	0.635
Total (acres)	**0.71**	**4.087**

[11] For the purpose of this analysis, only species with a rarity rank of S1, S2, or S3 are considered "sensitive natural communities".

Table 3.4.2: Summary of Impacts to CDFW Jurisdictional Riparian Habitat

Riparian Habitat Type	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)
Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed	0.024	0.064
Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest	--	0.012
Total (acres)	**0.024**	**0.076**

With the implementation of **measures BIO-4 and BIO-9 through BIO-14**, the Project would have a **less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated** on jurisdictional riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities identified in a local or regional plan, policy, or regulation or by the CDFW or USFWS.

BIO-9 **Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan**. Prior to the start of construction, CDFW shall approve a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to restore, either on- or off-site, all permanently impacted acreages of Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Bush Seepweed Scrub, and Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest. Permanent impacts shall be mitigated at a ratio of 1.5:1 (total acres replaced: total acres impacted) or through the purchase of credits through a CDFW approved mitigation bank.

BIO-10 **Temporary Impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities.** Prior to construction, all temporarily impacted acreages of Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Bush Seepweed Scrub and Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest shall be mitigated on and/or off-site through the temporary removal of above-ground vegetation during construction, without disturbing rootstocks, to facilitate regrowth following construction.

BIO-11 **Construction Best Management Practices**. During construction, all necessary best management practices (BMP) shall be implemented to ensure that no soil or other materials are discharged into Drainage 1. BMPs shall include the use of waddles and silt fences along access roads and around staging, equipment storage and work areas where the potential for impacts exist near Drainage 1. Construction mats, gravel, or other methods to reduce erosion shall be incorporated into the design of the streambed work area.

BIO-12 **Construction Period in Drainage 1**. Work within the Drainage 1 streambed shall be restricted to the low-flow season between June 15 and October 15.

BIO-13 **Restoration of Drainage 1**. Following construction, the temporarily impacted areas of Drainage 1 shall be returned to its original contour and condition to the greatest extent feasible. All constructed ramps into Drainage 1 for temporary construction access, construction mats, and other temporary material used for construction shall be removed.

BIO-14 **Construction Equipment Maintenance, Refueling, and Storage.** During construction, refueling, maintenance, and storage of construction equipment

and materials shall take place at least 100 feet from the Drainage 1 riparian canopy boundary.

c) No Impact

There are no state or federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act within the Project limits. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in temporary or permanent impacts to any state or federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Project would have **no impact** on state or federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. No mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant

Wildlife movement corridors are linear habitats that function to connect two or more areas of significant wildlife habitat. These corridors may function on a local level as links between small habitat patches (e.g., streams in urban settings) or may provide critical connections between regionally significant habitats (e.g., deer movement corridors). Wildlife corridors typically include vegetation and topography that facilitate the movements of wild animals from one area of suitable habitat to another to fulfill foraging, breeding, and territorial needs.

The project site is not within or adjacent to California Essential Habitat Connectivity mapped Natural Landscape Block or Essential Connectivity Areas. There are no known wildlife movement corridors or wildlife nursery sites within the project area. The Colorado River and its associated habitats, which is just east of the project area, serve as a wildlife movement corridor. However, the Colorado River corridor will be unaffected by the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

e) No Impact

The City of Blythe does not have a tree preservation policy or ordinance in place. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Therefore, the Project would have **no impact** related to conflicts with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. No mitigation is required.

f) No Impact

The proposed project does not fall in an area with an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan, and therefore would not present a conflict with any such plan.[12] Therefore, the Project would have **no impact** related to provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. No mitigation is required.

[12] California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2019. California Natural Community Conservation Plans. April. Website: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=68626&inline (accessed December 1, 2022).

3.5 Cultural Resources

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

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR)[13]. The HPSR includes the Archeological Survey Report (ASR) and Historic Resources Evaluation Report, which address the project's effects on archeological and built-environment resources, respectively[14]. The project study area for cultural resources is the Area of Potential Effects (APE), which is the area where ground-disturbing activities would take place, and it extends around the entirety of the parcels where the built environment may be directly or indirectly affected. The APE has been drawn to include the maximum extent of ground disturbance including access routes, staging, and work areas. The APE includes segments of Hobsonway and I-10, the inspection facility, a modern residence, and agricultural fields. The only historic-period built environment resource in the APE is the Food and Agricultural Inspection Station facility, which consists of the inspection station, a small office building, and ancillary features. The original inspection station was built in 1922 and the current station was built in 1958. The APE encompasses approximately 184 acres.

a) No Impact

CEQA defines a "historical resource" as a resource that meets one or more of the following criteria: (1) listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register); (2) listed in a local register of historical resources as defined in the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5020.1(k); (3) identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g); or (4) determined to be a historical resource by a project's Lead Agency (PRC Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)).

In September 2020, a records search was conducted by the Eastern Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System at the University of California, Riverside. On March 17, 2021, an architectural historian conducted a pedestrian survey of the historic-period buildings in the APE and on January 17 and 18, 2022, an archaeologist

[13] LSA Associates, Inc. 2022b. Historic Property Survey Report. Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project. June.

[14] The HPSR is not included as an appendix to this environmental document due to resource confidentiality. Refer to California Government Code Sections 6254.10 and 6254(r); California Code of Regulations Section 15120(d); and Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

conducted a field survey of the APE. As part of the pre-field research, background research for the APE was conducted using published literature in local and regional history, online resources regarding the history and development of the area, the Caltrans historic bridge inventories, and historic aerial photographs and maps of the project vicinity. Once resources requiring evaluation were identified, additional research was conducted to develop relevant historic contexts and property-specific chronologies. Outreach to historical groups and local historians was conducted beginning on August 18, 2021 to solicit input regarding historic-period resources in and around the APE.

One previously recorded resource ("Borrow Pit Drain," 33-011310) and an undocumented segment of another recorded resource ("F Canal," 33-011304) transect the APE. These two features are outside the vertical APE. Five additional resources are recorded within one mile of the project: three additional water conveyance features (33-011311, 33-011357, and 33-016599), one historic-period road (33-13273), and one Point of Historical Interest (Blythe Ferry Crossing, 33-007872). These five additional features would not be affected by the Project.

Per the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory, the Colorado River Bridge (Bridge No. 56 0008) between Blythe and Ehrenberg at the east end of the APE was built in 1960 and widened in 1974 and is listed as Category 5 (Bridge not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places). Only a short segment of the bridge approach is within the APE. With the exception of the existing BPS, the built environment properties within the project APE have been determined exempt from further evaluation pursuant to Attachment 4 of the Caltrans Section 106 PA as Property Types 1 (minor, ubiquitous, or fragmentary infrastructure elements) and 4 (buildings, structures, objects, districts, and sites 30 to 50 years old).

One historic-period (50 years of age or older) resource was identified and evaluated within the project APE. This resource, the existing California Agricultural Inspection Station consists of a metal-framed structure (1958) with a "California Mission Style" façade (1985), and a small, one-story office building (1958). Related features include a flagpole; a temporary, freestanding shade structure/carport; a small concrete block irrigation shed; and an approximately 200-square foot metal storage shed. All these related features are north of the metal structure and east of the office building. The one-story, metal-framed structure is on the westbound side of I-10, west of the California-Arizona border. The metal structure consists of horizontal beams supported by at least 12 poles. It has a very low-pitched shed roof. The modern façade is covered with rough textured stucco and appears to be freestanding, with the exception of electrical conduits that connect it to the metal structure. Sheltered by the metal structure are four traffic lanes, freestanding booths for the inspectors, and a modular office. The temporally ambiguous modular office has a flat roof and aluminum-framed sliding windows. A second, similar modular building is just west of the first modular building. The utilitarian metal structure appears to be in fair to good condition and to retain integrity, with the exception of the modern façade.

The freestanding, one-story, concrete block office building is approximately 100 feet northwest of the metal structure. This approximately 1,300-square foot building is rectangular in plan and has a flat roof with wide eaves. The concrete block exterior walls are either painted or covered with stucco. The articulated south elevation, facing I-10, has a modern door, a projecting bay with an aluminum-framed fixed window and an east-facing fixed window, and a pair of hopper windows. The projecting bay appears to be an addition. The east elevation has a wide metal door and an equipment cabinet. The north (rear) elevation has two doors that each access a restroom and three pairs of hopper windows set

high in the wall. The small yard area behind the building is secured with chain link fencing. There are no openings in the west elevation. This small, nondescript building appears to be in fair to good condition but has sustained alterations (modern doors and small addition).

The existing station (a State-owned resource) was evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (under Criterion A through D) and for designation as a California Historical Landmark (pursuant to PRC 5024 and 5024.5), but is not eligible for either register/designation and is not a historical resource as defined by CEQA. As such, removal of the structures would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource pursuant to *State CEQA Guidelines* §15064.5. In the absence of any substantial adverse change to a historic resource, there would be **no impact** resulting from the implementation of the project (e.g., demolition of existing structures as well as the construction, and operation of a new station); therefore, no mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

Based on the results of the background research and archaeological field survey, no archaeological resources were identified within or adjacent to the APE, and there is no indication of elevated sensitivity for the presence of previously undocumented buried archaeological resources to occur in the APE. The APE sits on the young Holocene alluvium (Qal) which has been farmed since the early 1900s. Geologic mapping of the project areas indicates the project area contains Colorado River alluvium. Artificial fill has been introduced into the project area from the previous construction of I-10. The integrity of the uppermost soil strata (to 1–4 feet in depth) has been severely disturbed by agricultural, road and extant inspection station construction activities, along with periodic flooding. Excavations within the APE will include areas where soil beneath structures and/or roadways has been disturbed by past construction and/or agricultural activities and therefore are unlikely to contain intact archaeological deposits. Therefore, subsurface sensitivity is low, and **no impact** is anticipated.

In the unlikely event that any previously unidentified archaeological resources are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, it is Caltrans' policy that work be halted in that area would be halted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. Adherence to standard Caltrans measures for the inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources, as specified in **measure CR-1**, would be implemented.

CR-1 **Discovery of Unanticipated Archaeological Resources.** If buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find.

c) No Impact

No evidence of human remains are present with the APE and there is no evidence to support the idea that cemeteries or human burial sites are within the APE and **no impact** is anticipated. In the unlikely event that human remains are encountered during Project construction, the proper authorities (i.e., Riverside County Coroner) shall be notified, and standard procedures for the respectful handling of human remains would be implemented during the earthmoving activities as specified by **measure CR-2**.

CR-2 **Discovery of Unanticipated Human Remains.** In the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Steven Holm, DEBC: (909) 292-2856 and Gary Jones, DNAC: (909) 261-8157. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

3.6 Energy

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

The discussion and analysis provided below is based on the data included in the CalEEMod output from the Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report.[15]

a) Less Than Significant

Construction-Period Energy Use. The anticipated construction schedule assumes that the Project would be built in two phases over approximately 2.5 years. The Project would require demolition, site preparation, grading, building construction, paving, and architectural coating during construction.

Construction of the Project would require energy for the manufacture and transportation of building materials and for preparation of the site for grading activities and building construction. Petroleum fuels (e.g., diesel and gasoline) would be the primary sources of energy for these activities. Compliance with the State's diversion of construction and demolition materials from landfills policies (California Green Building Standards [CALGreen] or CalRecycle), would minimize the energy consumption of construction debris management. The Project would also be required to comply with MDAQMD Rules 431.1 and 431.2 to reduce the release of undesirable emissions, in part to reduce wasteful energy usage in construction vehicles. Regulations from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for diesel vehicles and off-road diesel vehicle/equipment operations would reduce unnecessary idling and other energy-wasteful practices. Therefore, construction of the Project would be conducted efficiently consistent with existing regulatory requirements:

Construction activities are not anticipated to result in an inefficient use of energy because gasoline and diesel fuel would be supplied by construction contractors, who would conserve the use of their supplies to minimize their costs on the Project. Energy usage on the Project site during construction would be temporary in nature and would be relatively small in comparison to the State's available energy sources. Therefore, construction energy impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation would be required.

Operational Energy Use. Energy use includes both direct and indirect sources of emissions. Direct sources of emissions include on-site natural gas usage for heating, while indirect sources include electricity generated by off-site power plants. Natural gas use in CalEEMod is measured in units of a thousand British thermal units (kBTU) per year;

[15] LSA Associates, Inc. 2023. Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report. December.

however, this analysis converts the results to natural gas in units of therms. Electricity use in CalEEMod is measured in kWh per year.

CalEEMod divides building electricity and natural gas use into uses that are subject to California Building Code Title 24 standards and those that are not. For electricity, Title 24 uses include the major building envelope systems covered by Part 6 (California Energy Code) of Title 24 (e.g., space heating, space cooling, water heating, and ventilation). Non-Title 24 uses include all other end uses (e.g., appliances, electronics, and other miscellaneous plug-in uses). Because some lighting is not considered as part of the building envelope energy budget, CalEEMod considers lighting as a separate electricity use category.

The existing BPS was constructed in 1958 and would be demolished and replaced with a new more efficient one, including two new inspection buildings that comply with the current CALGreen Code (Title 24, Part 11), which became effective on January 1, 2017. The purpose of the CALGreen Code is to improve public health, safety, and general welfare by enhancing the design and construction of building using building concepts encouraging sustainable construction practices. The provisions of the CALGreen code apply to the planning, design, operation, construction, use, and occupancy of every newly construction building.

Additionally, the Project will include a 100 kW to 151 kW solar array to provide electricity to the Project. At a minimum, the solar array will cover the proposed parking areas and would offset 100 percent of the Project's energy consumption. The Project may also include solar panels on the proposed buildings. In this scenario, the Project would generate more than double the amount of energy needed to service the Project.

Natural gas use includes building heating and hot water uses, as well as appliances. Both the existing BPS and the proposed BPS include a natural gas incinerator for disposal of seized agricultural materials and firewood.

Table 3.6.1 shows the estimated potential electricity and natural gas demand associated with the Project compared to the existing BPS. The electricity and natural gas rates are from the CalEEMod analysis.

Table 3.6.1: Estimated Annual Energy Use of the Proposed Project

Energy Category	Existing BPS	Proposed BPS	Net Change
Electricity Use (kWh/yr)	492,493	0	-492,493
Natural Gas Use kBTU/yr)	101,670	229,543	127,873

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (December 2022).
BPS = border protection station
kBTU/yr = thousand British thermal units per year
kWh/yr = thousand kilowatt-hours per year

As shown in Table 3.6.1, the Project's solar array will offset 100 percent of the Project's electricity consumption, which will reduce the demand for electricity compared to the electricity demand for the existing BPS facility.

Table 3.6.1 also shows that the new BPS facility will result in an increase in natural gas demand of 127,873 kBTU per year, or 1,279 therms over the natural gas demand at the existing BPS facility. According to the CEC, total natural gas consumption in the SoCalGas

service area in 2021 was 5,101 million therms (CEC n.d.-a), while Riverside County consumed 430,843,598 therms (CEC n.d.-a). Therefore, the Project's increased demand for natural gas would amount to 0.0003 percent of Riverside County's total annual natural gas demand.

Currently, traffic often backs up from the BPS facility to and over the Colorado River. The Project would demolish the existing Blythe BPS facility and would construct a new Blythe BPS facility approximately 0.66 mile west of its existing location. The new location would improve traffic operations along westbound I-10 and would be sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations. The Project would not generate new vehicle trips but would serve existing traffic that is passing through the area. As such, the project would not result in an increase in gasoline or diesel fuel demand generated by vehicle trips associated with the project. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in a substantial increase in transportation-related energy uses.

Increasingly stringent electricity, natural gas, and fuel efficiency standards, combined with compliance with the California Building Code and the CALGreen Code, would ensure that the Project would only use the energy it requires. Construction and operation of the project would not consume energy in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary manner during project construction and operation and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

In 2002, the Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 1389, which required the CEC to develop an integrated energy plan every 2 years for electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuels for the Integrated Energy Policy Report. The plan calls for the State to assist in the transformation of the transportation system to improve air quality, reduce congestion, and increase the efficient use of fuel supplies with the least environmental and energy costs. To further this policy, the plan identifies a number of strategies, including assistance to public agencies and fleet operators in implementing incentive programs for zero-emission vehicles and their infrastructure needs, and encouragement of urban designs that reduce VMT and accommodate pedestrian and bicycle access.

The CEC recently adopted the *2022 Integrated Energy Policy Report Update* (2022). The Integrated Energy Policy Report provides the results of the CEC's assessments of a variety of energy issues facing California. As indicated above, energy usage on the Project site during construction would be temporary in nature and would be relatively small in comparison to the overall use in Riverside County. In addition, energy usage associated with operation of the Project would be relatively small in comparison to the overall use in Riverside County and the State's available energy resources. Therefore, energy impacts at the regional level would be negligible. Because California's energy conservation planning actions are conducted at a regional level and because the Project's total impact on regional energy supplies would be minor, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct California's energy conservation plans as described in the CEC's Integrated Energy Policy Report. Therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

3.7 Geology and Soils

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

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Geotechnical Design Report[16], Materials Report[17] and Combined Paleontological Identification Report/ Paleontological Evaluation Report[18].

a) i) No Impact

Although the site is considered to be in a seismically active area, the nearest active faults to the project area are the Elmore Ranch fault and San Andreas fault, both approximately 70 miles west of the site. As there are no active faults on or immediately adjacent to the site

[16] Ninyo & Moore. 2022a. Geotechnical Design Report Blythe Border Protection Station Blythe, California 08-RIV-10-PM R155.0/R156.5 EFIS 0819000139, EA 1L0400. May.

[17] Ninyo & Moore. 2022b. Materials Report Blythe Border Protection Station Blythe, California 08-RIV-10-PM R155.0/R156.5 EFIS 0819000139, EA 1L0400. June.

[18] LSA Associates, Inc. 2022c. Combined Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report, Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project, City of Blythe, Riverside County, California. May.

and because the site is not within or adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone as defined by the State of California in the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, **no impact** related to fault rupture would occur. No mitigation is required.

a) ii) Less Than Significant

The extent of ground shaking depends on several factors including the magnitude of the causative earthquake, the distance to the epicenter, and the geologic unit underlying the site. The project site is in a region traditionally characterized by moderate to high seismic activity, which could result in damage to structures and other improvements due to ground shaking. **Measure GEO-1** stipulates that the final grading, design and/or construction documents shall include appropriate incorporate the geotechnical and seismic recommendations identified in the project-specific Geometric Design Report and Materials Report, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and applicable earthwork/design guidelines established by the City of Blythe to address the impacts of strong seismic ground shaking on the Project. With implementation of **measure GEO-1**, potential project impacts associated with seismic ground shaking would be **less than significant.** No mitigation is required.

GEO-1 **Seismic Requirements.** Prior to ground-disturbing activities, the final grading, design and/or construction documents for any structure, feature, and or roadway improvement associated with the Blythe BPS Replacement Project shall be reviewed and approved by Caltrans to ensure they fully incorporate the geotechnical and seismic recommendations identified in the project-specific Geometric Design Report and Materials Report, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and applicable earthwork/design guidelines established by the City of Blythe. Evidence of compliance with applicable earthwork, design and construction shall be provided to Caltrans prior to the initiation of any project-related ground disturbance.

a) iii) Less Than Significant

Liquefaction is known generally to occur in saturated or near-saturated cohesionless soils at depths shallower than 50 feet below the ground surface. Factors known to influence liquefaction potential include composition and thickness of soil layers, grain size, relative density, groundwater level, degree of saturation, and both intensity and duration of ground shaking. Per the Geotechnical Design Report, mapped liquefaction susceptibility at the site is very high. Additionally, groundwater was encountered at depths as shallow as 14 feet below ground surface (bgs), Borings below this depth encountered layers of loose to medium dense sand. Based on these conditions, the project site is susceptible to liquefaction; therefore, the development of new structures, ancillary features, and roadways would expose these facilities to a potential risk from seismic-induced liquefaction.

The Caltrans-approved Geometric Design Report and the Materials Report identify appropriate incorporate design, grading, and construction recommendations to address potential seismic risks, including the potential for on-site liquefaction. These recommendations comply with applicable California Building Code requirements, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and applicable earthwork/design guidelines established by the City of Blythe. **Measure GEO-1** has been previously identified to ensure the project-specific recommendations are incorporated into the design and construction of the structures and roadways e developed under the Blythe BPS Replacement Project. Upon implementation of

measure GEO-1, liquefaction-related impacts associated with the occupation of the Blythe BPS would be reduced to a **less than significant** level. No mitigation is required.

a) iv) No Impact

Seismically induced landslides and other slope failures are common occurrences during or soon after earthquakes in areas with significant ground slopes. The project site is relatively flat. Based on available topographic maps in the area, ground elevations within the project area range from approximately 268 to 284 feet. Existing cuts and fills within the project area are those associated with the construction of Hobsonway and I-10, which include embankments up to 10 feet in height. Due to the absence of significant topography in the project area, the Project would have **no impacts** related to substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, involving landslides. No mitigation is required.

b) Less Than Significant

During construction activities, approximately 41 acres of soil would be disturbed. Soil would be exposed and drainage patterns would be temporarily altered during grading and other construction activities, and there would be an increased potential for soil erosion and siltation compared to existing conditions. Additionally, during a storm event, soil erosion and siltation could occur at an accelerated rate. As required by the Construction General Permit (CGP), the incorporation of BMPs in project-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) designed to reduce water quality impacts will also offset impacts related to soil erosion and siltation during project-related construction activities. As specified in **measure WQ-1** (see Section 3.10a), the proposed project would comply with the requirements of the CGP. With compliance with the requirements in the Construction General Permit and implementation of the construction BMPs as specified in **measure WQ-1,** construction impacts related to on- or off-site erosion or siltation would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

The proposed project would result in a net increase of impervious surface area of 14.97 acres, including 10.58 acres inside Caltrans right-of-way and 4.39 outside Caltrans right-of-way. The project would implement post-construction requirements of the CGP and Caltrans-approved Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs to reduce sediment in stormwater runoff. Design Pollution Prevention BMPs proposed as part of the project include collecting roadway runoff using dikes, curbs, and drainage swales, two design pollution prevention infiltration areas, minimizing cut-and-fill slopes, preserving existing vegetated slopes to the greatest extent possible, and replanting new slopes and disturbed areas with stabilizing vegetation.[19] Adherence to the practices detailed in **measures-WQ-1 through WQ-5** (see Section 3.10a), would ensure the project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; therefore, impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) Less Than Significant

Lateral spreading is defined as lateral displacement of gently sloping or flat-laying ground as a result of pore-pressure buildup or liquefaction in a shallow underlying deposit toward a free face such as an excavation, channel, or open body of water. Lateral spreading is generally caused by liquefaction of soils with gentle slopes. Based on the subsurface

[19] Psomas, 2022c. Final Drainage Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. December.

stratigraphy and the topography of the subject area and a lack of free-faces, the project site is not considered susceptible to seismically induced lateral spreading. Land subsidence is a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the ground surface due to removal or displacement of subsurface resources (e.g., groundwater, oil, natural gas) As the project does not include such removal, there is no potential for subsidence during the construction or operation of the Blythe BPS Replacement Project. Furthermore, the project area is in a relatively flat landscape and is not near or adjacent to topography that would generate a landslide hazard.

Collapsible soils are defined as any unsaturated soil that goes through a radical rearrangement of particles and great decrease in volume upon wetting, additional loading, or both. According to the United States Geological Survey's Areas of Land Subsidence in California, the project site is not in an area of recorded subsidence[20].

As stated previously (3.7.a.iii), the presence of shallow groundwater in the project area would expose project facilities to an increased risk of damage from liquefaction that may occur during a seismic event. **Measure GEO-1** has been previously identified to address potential geotechnical and seismic impacts that may result from implementation of the Blythe BPS Replacement Project. The Project would not be on a geologic unit or soils that would become unstable, or expose people or structures to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse and implementation of **measure GEO-1** would reduce liquefaction-related impacts associated with the Project to a **less than significant** level. No mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant

Expansive soils contain a significant amount of clay particles that may expand (absorb water) or contract (release water). Fill materials were observed at or close to the ground surface in several of the borings performed during the geotechnical investigation. The thickness of fill encountered in the borings ranged from approximately 1 to 8 feet and varied across the project site. The fill generally consisted of loose to very dense, silty sand, silty sand with gravel, poorly graded sand with gravel, sandy silt, and poorly graded gravel with silt and sand, and soft to very stiff lean clay, lean clay with sand, and silty clay[21]. Varying amounts of gravel and cobbles, gravel-sized asphalt and concrete fragments, and organic materials were observed within the fill across the site. Varying amounts of gravel and cobbles were encountered in the alluvial materials. Layers of weakly to moderately cemented caliche were observed in several borings.

Per the project-specific Geometric Design Report and the Materials Report, to provide uniform support for the foundations of the proposed stations, ancillary features (e.g., tanks, concrete sidewalk/curbing, potential solar arrays, catch basins, parking areas, canopy and/or windscreen structures, and other hardscape improvements), and the proposed roadway construction (i.e., Hobsonway realignment and I-10 on-/off-ramps), the upper 24 inches of the subgrade should be removed and replaced with granular materials having a low expansion potential.

[20] United States Geological Survey. n.d. Areas of Land Subsidence in California. Website: https://ca.water.usgs.gov/land_subsidence/california-subsidence-areas.html (accessed January 12, 2023).

[21] Predominant soils within the project area include Indio silty clay loam, Gilman silty clay, Imperial silty clay, Meloland fine sandy loam, and Ripley silty clay loam.

Measure GEO-1 has been previously identified to address potential geotechnical and seismic impacts that may result from implementation of the Blythe BPS Replacement Project. Implementation of **measure GEO-1** would ensure **a less than significant impact** related to expansive soils would result from project development. No mitigation is required.

e) No Impact

The Project includes the construction of a small force sewer pump system within the footprint of the Blythe BPS and outside the Caltrans right-of-way. The sewer pump system will feed into the relocated 6-inch force sewer line along the new Hobsonway alignment. The Project does not include the installation of septic tanks or alternate waste disposal systems, Therefore, there would be **no impacts** related to the capability of on-site soils to adequately support the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. No mitigation is required.

f) No Impact

Geologic mapping indicates the project area contains four subunits of Colorado River Alluvium deposited in the modern and historical Colorado River floodplain. Though not mapped, there is likely Artificial Fill within the project area from the previous construction of I-10, as well as previous and existing agricultural uses.

A fossil locality search was conducted through the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. The locality search included a one-mile buffer around the current project area. The purpose of a locality search is to establish the status and extent of previously recorded paleontological resources in and adjacent to the project area. Based on this locality search, there are no known fossil localities within the boundaries of the project area.

A field survey of the project area was conducted on January 17 and 18, 2022. The majority of the project area consists of land that has been paved or used for agricultural purposes and has been substantially disturbed. As such, visibility within the project area ranged from 0 to 25 percent. The dirt lots located along Hobsonway, especially at the eastern end of the project, provided the best access to native sediments, with visibility ranging from 65 to 90 percent. The native sediments observed from these dirt lots consisted of either tan fine-grained sand with abundant pebbles or medium-brown silty fine-grained sand. These native deposits were consistent with the surficial geology mapping. No paleontological resources were observed during the field survey.

Based on the results of this locality search and field reconnaissance, no special paleontological situations that would require project redesign to avoid critical fossil localities or deposits are anticipated for this project. The project area is mapped with geologic units that have no or low paleontological sensitivity, and the depth at which scientifically significant fossils ago would likely be encountered within the project area is greater than the maximum depth to which project activities will extend, including the 6 feet for utility trenching and possibly even the 33 feet for overhead sign pile driving. Moreover, driving piles for the overhead signs has a limited impact area with low potential to impact paleontological resources.

In the absence of any previously recorded locality or observed on-site paleontological resource, the highly disturbed nature of native soils, the potential for the project to impact paleontological resources is low; therefore, **no impact** to paleontological resources would occur; and no mitigation is required.

3.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

The analysis provided below is based on the data included in the Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report.[22]

a) Less Than Significant

Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Construction activities associated with the Project would produce combustion emissions from various sources. Construction would emit greenhouse gases (GHG) through the operation of construction equipment and from worker and builder supply vendor vehicles for the duration of the approximately 17- and 14-month construction periods. The combustion of fossil-based fuels creates GHGs such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O). Furthermore, the fueling of heavy equipment emits CH_4. Exhaust emissions from on-site construction activities would vary daily as construction activity levels change.

Although Caltrans is the lead agency for the Project, the Project is not a transportation project. The MDAQMD is the regional agency responsible for monitoring air quality and GHG in the San Bernardino County portion of the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). As such, this analysis follows the guidelines identified by the MDAQMD in its CEQA and Federal Air Conformity Guidelines.

MDAQMD does not have an adopted threshold of significance for construction-related GHG emissions. However, lead agencies are required to quantify and disclose GHG emissions that would occur during construction. Other air districts, such as the nearby South Coast Air Quality Management District, recommend construction GHG emissions be amortized over the life of the Project, defined as 30 years, added to the operational emissions, and the combination compared to the applicable interim GHG significance threshold for operational emissions[23]. Therefore, this is the approach that was used for assessing construction GHG emissions associated with the proposed project.

[22] LSA Associates, Inc. 2023. Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report. December.

[23] South Coast Air Quality Management District, 2008. *Draft Guidance Document – Interim CEQA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Significance Threshold*. October. Website: http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/greenhouse-gases-(ghg)-ceqa-significance-thresholds/ghgattachmente.pdf

As described further in Section 3.21, Climate Change, construction GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod. The Project would generate an estimated 2,272 metric tons of CO_2e during the Project's approximately 2.5 year construction period. When amortized over the 30-year life of the Project, annual emissions would be 76 metric tons of CO_2e. The significance of these emissions is determined based on the combined construction and operational GHG emissions, as discussed below.

Operational GHG Emissions. Long-term operation of the Project would generate GHG emissions from area, mobile, stationary, waste, and water sources as well as indirect emissions from sources associated with energy consumption. Area-source emissions would be associated with activities such as landscaping and maintenance on the Project site and other sources. Mobile-source GHG emissions would include Project-generated vehicle trips associated with employee trips to the Project. Stationary-source emissions would be associated with the incinerator and emergency generator. Waste-source emissions generated by the Project include energy generated by landfilling and other methods of disposal related to transporting and managing Project-generated waste. Water-source emissions associated with the Project are generated by water supply and conveyance, water treatment, water distribution, and wastewater treatment.

As described further in Section 3.21, Climate Change, operational GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod. The Project would generate 472 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year (MT CO_2e/year), which would result in a net increase of 357 MT CO_2e/year over existing conditions. This net 357 MT CO_2e/year equals 394 tons of CO_2e per year. As discussed above, although Caltrans is the lead agency for the Project, the Project is not a transportation project. As such, this analysis follows the guidelines identified by the MDAQMD in its CEQA and Federal Air Conformity Guidelines. The Project's net increase of 394 tons of CO_2e/year is less than the MDAQMD interim threshold of 100,000 tons CO_2e/year. Therefore, project-level GHG emissions would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce GHG emissions. These measures are outlined in Section 3.21 Climate Change.

In addition, the 2020–2045 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) complies with the emission reduction targets established by the CARB and meets the requirements of Senate Bill 375 as codified in Government Code Section 65080(b) et seq. by achieving per capita GHG emission reductions relative to 2005 of 8 percent by 2020 and 18 percent by 2035, which meets or exceeds targets set by CARB. As required by SB 375, the SCS outlines growth strategies that better integrate land use and transportation planning and help reduce the State's GHG emissions from cars and light trucks.

The Project site is not included in the 2020–2045 RTP/SCS; however, the proposed Project would be consistent with the City's General Plan, the Colorado River Corridor Plan, and the goals of the 2020–2045 RTP/SCS. The Project would include the development of three inspection canopies; two inspection buildings, a main vehicle inspection building, and a commercial truck inspection building; a parking area; and various road improvements. The Project would generate approximately 20 average daily trips; however, the project would be consistent with SCAG's goals for new job growth in the region. Based on the nature of the

Project, it is anticipated that implementation of the Project would not interfere with SCAG's ability to implement the regional strategies outlined in the RTP/SCS.

Therefore, the Project would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs, and **no impact** would occur. No mitigation is required.

3.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Initial Site Assessment[24], Aerially Deposited Lead Survey/Limited Site Investigation[25] and Combined Hazardous Building Material Survey[26].

a) Less Than Significant

The act of regulating the transport of hazardous materials on State highways is governed by the United States Department of Transportation, as described in Title 49 (Subtitle B, Chapter 1) of the CFR and by Title 13 (Chapter 2, Division 6) of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). The State Office of Hazardous Materials Safety enforces regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. It is likely that hazardous materials such as fuels, lubricants, solvents, coatings will be transported to, stored and/or used during the period of construction. The volume of any such material transported to the project is limited to that required for construction activities. During project construction, the use of these hazardous materials would be typical for construction activities and would be handled,

[24] Ninyo & Moore. 2021. Initial Site Assessment California Food and Agriculture Blythe Border Protection Station. September.
[25] Ninyo & Moore. 2020b. Aerially Deposited Lead Survey and Limited Site Investigation Report.
[26] Ninyo & Moore. 2020a. Hazardous Building Material Survey Report. February.

stored, and disposed in accordance with existing regulations and would not pose a significant hazard to the public or environment. Upon completion of the proposed construction, no ongoing or routine transport of hazardous materials to the Project site would be required.

During construction, there is a limited risk of accidental release of hazardous material such as gasoline, oil, or other fluids used in the operation and maintenance of construction equipment. Any hazardous waste produced on site would be subject to requirements associated with accumulation time limits, proper storage locations and containers, proper labeling, and proper disposal. Compliance with applicable regulations would ensure impacts associated with the use, and/or disposal of hazardous materials used during construction would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

b) Less Than Significant

An Initial Site Assessment[27] was conducted for the BPS project site. The Initial Site Assessment included the following efforts:

- Review of physical setting and background information
- Site reconnaissance (December 17, 2019, and August 9, 2021)
- Review of federal, State, tribal, and local regulatory agency databases for the site and for properties located within a specified radius of the site
- Review of reasonably ascertainable local regulatory agency files for the site, as applicable
- Review of historical information for the site, such as historical aerial photographs, historical topographic maps, and Sanborn fire insurance maps

The objective of this effort was evaluate the project area for recognized environmental conditions (RECs), which is defined as “the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property: (1) due to any release into the environment; (2) under conditions indicative of a release to the environment; or (3) under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment. De minimis conditions are not recognized environmental conditions.”

RECs fall into the following three categories: existing RECs; Historical RECs (HRECs); or Controlled RECs (CRECs).[28]

[27] Ninyo & Moore. 2021. Initial Site Assessment California Food and Agriculture Blythe Border Protection Station. September.

[28] HREC is defined as “a past release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products that has occurred in connection with the property and has been addressed to the satisfaction of the applicable regulatory authority or meeting unrestricted use criteria established by a regulatory authority, without subjecting the property to any required controls (for example, property use restrictions, activity and use limitations [AULs], institutional controls, or engineering controls).” An HREC is an environmental condition, which in the past, would have been considered a REC but currently may or may not be considered a REC.

The review included a radius search of up to 0.5 mile to assess whether historical practices would have a potential impact to the project site. The project site was assessed for the presence of possible contamination. The following RECs were identified:

- Aerially deposited lead (ADL) may be present in the unpaved shallow soil or landscaped areas as a result of historical vehicle emissions during the era of leaded gasoline.
- Organochlorine pesticides (OCP) and/or arsenic may be present in soil on the site from former and current agricultural activities.
- Chromium and/or lead may be present in traffic paint striping on roadways within the project site.

These RECs were further addressed through the preparation of an Aerially Deposited Lead and Limited Site Investigation (see discussion below.) During the field reconnaissance, hazardous substances observed at the Blythe BPS included an approximately 1,000-gallon propane, above-ground storage tank, a cleaning chemical closet, and a pad-mounted gasoline backup generator without secondary containment. Physical evidence of storage mishandling of hazardous substances (e.g., staining, signs of release) was not observed and these uses are not considered an environmental concern at the Project site.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls. Electrical transformers can be a source of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB). There is an electrical substation approximately 170 feet north of the central portion of the Project site and east of the intersection of Olive Lake Boulevard and Hobsonway. Based on aerial photographs, this substation was constructed by 1973 and may have or had PCB containing transformers on the property. During the field reconnaissance, staining or signs of release were not observed at the substation. Two pole-mounted transformers were observed in the eastern portion of the site along Hobsonway. Staining or signs of release were not observed at the transformers. These features are not considered an environmental concern for the project site

Vapor Migration. A preliminary vapor encroachment screen (pVES) was conducted to assess the potential chemicals of concern (COC) that may migrate as vapors onto the project site as a result of contaminated soil and/or groundwater near the site. The purpose of the pVES is to identify a vapor encroachment condition (VEC), which is the presence or likely presence of COC vapors in subsurface soils at the Project site caused by the release of vapors from contaminated soil or groundwater either on or near the Project site. The potential for VEC beneath the Project site was evaluated using a Vapor Encroachment Screening Matrix (VESM). The VESM included (1) performing a Search Distance Test to identify if there are any known or suspected contaminated sites surrounding or up-gradient of the Project site within specific search radii, (2) a COC Test (for those known or suspect contaminated sites identified within the Search Distance Test) to evaluate whether or not COCs are likely to be present, and (3) a Critical Distance Test to evaluate whether or not COCs in a contaminated plume may be within the critical distance of the Project site (100

CREC is defined as a “recognized environmental condition resulting from a past release of hazardous substances or petroleum products that has been addressed to the satisfaction of the applicable regulatory authority (for example, as evidenced by the issuance of a no further action letter or equivalent, or meeting risk-based criteria established by a regulatory authority), with hazardous substances or petroleum products allowed to remain in place subject to the implementation of required controls (for example, property use restrictions, AULs, institutional controls, or engineering controls).”

feet for non-petroleum contaminants and 30 feet for petroleum hydrocarbon contaminants). Based on these efforts, it was determined it is unlikely that a VEC currently exists beneath the project site.

Aerially Deposited Lead. Based on the findings of the Initial Site Assessment, an aerially deposited lead survey and limited site investigation was conducted in the project area in December 2021[29]. For the ADL testing, 38 borings were advanced to depths up to four feet bgs in unpaved roadway shoulders. Samples were collected at depths of approximately 0.5, 1, 2, 3, and 4 feet bgs. A total of 190 soil samples from borings were analyzed for lead. Detectable concentrations of lead were reported for ADL soil samples for depths ranging from near surface to four feet bgs.

According to the Soil Management Agreement between the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and Caltrans, "clean soil" is defined as "soil not containing total lead over 80 mg/kg based on a 95 percent UCL or soluble lead over 5 mg/L based on a 95 percent UCL as determined by the CA-WET and not containing other constituents at levels that would pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment or be unacceptable to the Regional Water Quality Control Board with jurisdiction." The 95 UCL calculated for ADL at the site was 32.66 mg/kg. Based on the results of the laboratory analysis, the soil at the Project site is considered to be "clean" (does not contain lead at levels in excess of established standards), does not contain other constituents[30] at levels that would pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment, and is not considered to be a hazardous substance. Therefore, neither disturbing the soil nor using it as fill within the project limits would create a significant hazard. Soil within the project site should be characterized as non-hazardous waste for off-site disposal

Organochlorine and Organophosphorus Pesticides (Agricultural Soil). For agricultural samples, 40 samples were collected from 18 borings at depths from 0.5 to 2.5 bgs. The 40 soil samples were analyzed for Title 22 Metals. Additional soil samples were analyzed for OCPs. Arsenic concentrations in the 40 soil samples ranged from 2.1 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) to 9.6 mg/kg. Although several detected arsenic concentrations were above screening levels, these concentrations were below the DTSC upper boundary concentration of 12 mg/kg for Southern California. The remaining results of these analyses were within acceptable levels and would not cause the soil to be hazardous when disturbed with respect to Title 22 Metals.

No OCPs were detected in exceedance of established screening levels.

Organophosphorus pesticides (OPPs) were not detected in the 10 composite soil samples and the one duplicate composite sample analyzed at concentrations above their respective laboratory reporting limit. One chlorinated herbicide, dimethyl tetrachloroterephthalate (mono and diacid) was detected in two composite soil samples at concentrations of 0.068 and 0.050 mg/kg, respectively. Concentrations of other chlorinated herbicides were below their respective laboratory reporting limits. Based on the reported results, agricultural soil at

[29] Ninyo & Moore. 2020b. Aerially Deposited Lead Survey and Limited Site Investigation Report.

[30] Boring samples were comprehensively tested for Title 22 Metals: antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, lead, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, thalilum, vanadium, and zinc.

the site is not considered hazardous with respect to OCPs, OPPs, and chlorinated herbicides.

Chromium and Lead (Traffic Striping). Traffic stripe paint samples were collected from 14 locations approximately every 500 feet along paved roadways in the project area. The traffic stripe paint samples were obtained by striking traffic stripes with a hammer and chisel to remove paint from underlying pavement. The traffic stripe paint samples were analyzed for total lead and chromium. Based on the results of the traffic stripe sampling, the traffic striping in the vicinity of sample TS-7 (Hobsonway, approximately 960 feet east of Olive Lake Boulevard) requires removal and is considered a California Hazardous Waste (non-Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA] hazardous) with respect to lead. Once the paint striping is removed in this area, it should be manifested as a California Hazardous Waste and taken to an appropriate landfill. Paint used for traffic stipes in other areas at the Project site is not considered hazardous with respect to lead and chromium. However, removal of traffic striping must be performed in compliance with lead safe work practices described in 8 CCR 1532.1.

Asbestos and Lead Containing Surfaces Survey. A hazardous building material survey (HBMS) of existing structures within the BPS was conducted on January 13, 2020. The survey included a visual inspection of structures to evaluate them for the possible presence of asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and lead-containing surfaces (LCS), referring to lead-based paint [LBP]); the collection and laboratory testing of 59 bulk asbestos samples; and a visual inspection of miscellaneous hazardous materials including, but not limited to fluorescent light bulbs (possible mercury); fluorescent light ballasts (possible PCB-containing oils); high intensity light bulbs (possible mercury); thermostat switches (possible liquid mercury and/or batteries); emergency lighting and exit signs (possible lead acid or other metal containing batteries or tritium); heating, ventilation, and air conditioning and refrigeration systems (possible chlorofluorocarbon gas); and other possible hazardous materials[31].

Based on observations and/or the analytical results of bulk samples collected during the survey, ACMs and asbestos-containing construction materials (ACCMs) were detected within the drywall and pipe gaskets within the existing administrative office. Other building materials in the remaining structures were identified as not containing asbestos.

A total of 155 XRF[32] readings were collected (including calibration readings) on potential LCSs throughout existing structures at the BPS. Positive[33] LCS samples were identified in the I beam, supporting beams, and columns of the agricultural inspection area and on various locations in the administrative office.

As traffic striping at select locations contains chromium/lead and because ACMs and LBPs are within existing structures at the BPS, the removal of traffic striping and the demolition of existing BPS structures could potentially introduce these hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, implementation of **measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3** would be required to remove potentially hazardous materials in compliance with applicable

[31] Ninyo & Moore. 2020a. Hazardous Building Material Survey Report.

[32] Nilton XLP Analyzer. The XRF analyzer is a direct-reading instrument that determines the concentration of lead in paints by subjecting the paint to energy from a small radioactive source when the instrument is held against the paint and analyzing the absorption of X-rays by the paint.

[33] Greater than 1 milligram per square centimeter.

procedures and State of California standards for the removal and disposal of these substances.

HAZ-1 Prior to handling traffic striping material, the Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit a lead compliance plan to Caltrans for review and approval. During construction, the removal, handling and disposal of traffic striping material by the Construction Contractor shall adhere to Caltrans Standard Specifications (14-11.12).

HAZ-2 Prior to the start of any demolition activity, the Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit an asbestos compliance plan to Caltrans for review and approval.

Prior to any demolition activity on/within the administrative office, the Construction Contractor shall provide evidence that any ACM and/or ACCM identified during the Hazardous Building Materials Survey has been removed pursuant to the requirements identified below.

- Prior to demolition activities that would disturb identified ACMs, a licensed abatement removal contractor shall remove the ACMs in accordance with the associated abatement specification documents. The licensed abatement contractor must maintain current licenses as required by applicable state or local jurisdictions for the removal, transporting, disposal, or other regulated activities.

- Applicable laws and regulations shall be followed, including those provisions requiring notification to regulatory agencies, building occupants, demolition contractors, and workers of the presence of asbestos.

- The assumed asbestos-containing gaskets identified in the HBMS shall be made accessible in order to sample and have analyzed for asbestos content to determine the appropriate handling and disposal requirements.

- Asbestos abatement monitoring consulting services shall be performed by a third party environmental consultant, to include oversight of abatement contractor activities to be performed in accordance with the abatement specifications, daily air monitoring, clearances, verification of complete removal of hazardous materials, and preparation of a closeout report summarizing the abatement activities.

HAZ-3 Prior to any demolition activity on/within the administrative office identified or on the I beam, supporting beams and columns of the agricultural inspection area, the Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit a lead compliance plan and provide evidence that LBP and/or LCS identified during the Hazardous Building Materials Survey has been removed pursuant to the lead compliance plan as well as the requirements identified below:

- All disturbances and removal activities shall be performed by a licensed abatement contractor with certified lead personnel. All paint in a non-intact (poor) condition shall be stabilized as soon as possible. All lead

related removal activities shall be performed in accordance with the DOSH Lead in Construction Standard, Title 8 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1532.1.

- Proper LCS waste stream categorization is required for lead components which will be removed and segregated. Prior to disposal, a composite sample of the representative LCS material shall be analyzed for total lead for comparison with the Total Threshold Limit Concentration in accordance with EPA reference method SW-846. If the concentration of total lead is greater than or equal to 1,000 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg), the LCS waste material must be disposed at a landfill which can receive such wastes. If the concentration is less than 50 mg/kg, the sample may be disposed as construction debris, if it is to remain in California. If the total lead result is greater than or equal to 50 mg/kg and less than 1,000 mg/kg, the sample must be further analyzed for soluble lead by the Waste Extraction Test for comparison with the Soluble Threshold Limit Concentration as described in Title 22 CCR 66261.24a. Additionally, if the result is greater than or equal to 100 mg/kg the sample must be further analyzed for leachable lead by the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure for comparison with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) limits. Based on the results of the soluble and leachable analysis the waste material may require disposal as a RCRA hazardous waste or non-RCRA- (California-) hazardous waste.

- Lead abatement monitoring consulting services shall be performed by a third-party environmental consultant, to include oversight of abatement contractor activities to be performed in accordance with the abatement specifications, daily air monitoring, clearances, verification of complete removal of hazardous materials, and preparation of a closeout report summarizing the abatement activities.

The existing and proposed Blythe BPS is on I-10 and conducts agricultural inspection activities on all vehicular traffic entering California from the east. Due to its location and function, a variety of potentially hazardous substances/materials (either in their unprocessed form or as incorporated into goods/materials) will continue to pass through the Project site. These activities currently occur in the project area under existing conditions. As the project includes a replacement/relocation of a facility that will fulfill the same purpose, the proposed Blythe BPS Replacement itself will not increase the potential for accident or upset that would cause the release of hazardous material transported through the project area. As stated in the response to Checklist Question 3.9(a), the California Office of Hazardous Materials Safety enforces regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that operation of the Project would not create a significant hazard through the reasonable foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials. Adherence to established hazardous material removal and disposal required under **measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-3** will reduce potential impacts related to the potential release of hazardous substances/materials in existing BPS buildings and traffic striping to **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) No Impact

The nearest schools to the project area include Ruth Brown Elementary School (241 North 7th Avenue) and Felix J. Appleby Elementary School (10321 East Vernon Avenue) 2.5 miles northwest and 2.8 miles northwest of the project area, respectively[34]. Due to their distance from the project area, the Blythe BPS Replacement Project would not expose students within 0.25 mile to hazardous emissions or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste. In the absence of any such exposure, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

d) No Impact

A search of federal, state, tribal, and local hazardous materials databases was conducted to evaluate whether the Project site or locations within the vicinity of the Project site have been documented as having experienced significant unauthorized releases of hazardous substances or other events with potentially adverse environmental effects[35]. The radii used in the database search ranged from 0 to 0.50 miles from the site. National Priority List, RCRA Treatment, Storage, or Disposal facilities, or Superfund Enterprise Management System properties were not listed on or within the search radii from the site.

Three off-site areas of potential concern were identified. These included:

- Destiny Riviera RV Resort/Alpine Riviera LC at 14100 Riviera Drive, approximately 0.13 mile southeast of the site, was listed on the leaking underground storage tank (LUST) database. In 1999, two 6,000-gallon gasoline underground storage tanks (UST) and one 4,000-gallon gasoline UST were removed from the property and replaced with one 8,000-gallon gasoline UST. Shallow contamination was reported at the time of the UST removals. The RWQCB requested a work plan for remediation of the contaminated soil by August 1, 2003. The Regional Water Quality Control Board, Colorado River Basin issued a No Further Action letter to the facility on September 26, 2007, and the case was closed on July 1, 2009. Since this facility has a case closure status and is more than 1,000 feet down-gradient from the site, this facility does not represent an environmental concern for the Project site.
- Riviera RV Resort/The Cove RV Resort at 500 Riviera Drive, approximately 0.2 mile southeast of the site. According to the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS) database, from 2015 to 2019, this facility received numerous violations regarding UST leak detection equipment, failures to submit and maintain a facility plot plan, and failure to submit an application for a permit to operate a UST, among other general UST compliance violations. Based on the distance, its location downgradient from the site, and the nature of these violations, this listing does not represent an environmental concern to the Project site.
- Nichols Keith, 1761 East Hobsonway, directly north of the site. This facility was listed as a gasoline service station from 1978 to 1983. This facility was not listed on other environmental databases. Based on aerial photographs and historical topographic maps, there is no evidence that a gasoline service station was present in this location. Based

[34] Palo Verde Unified School District. n.d. Palo Verde Unified Schools. Website: https://www.pvusd.us/Schools/index.html (accessed December 6, 2022).

[35] Ninyo & Moore. 2021. Initial Site Assessment California Food and Agriculture Blythe Border Protection Station. September.

on this information, this listing does not represent an environmental concern to the Project site.

Based on a review of historic aerial photographs, topographic maps, and appropriate hazardous materials databases, the site is not located on a known or hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5; therefore, the Project would not create a significant hazard to the public. **No impact** would occur. No mitigation is warranted.

e) No Impact

The Project site is approximately 10 miles east of Blythe Airport, a general aviation airport. The Project site is not within the limits of an airport land use plan, the Airport Influence Area established for the Blythe Airport, or within 65 A-weighted decibel (dBA) Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) contour identified for the Blythe Airport[36]. Due to its distance from Blythe Airport, the Project would not expose persons to an airport safety hazard or excessive noise. **No impact** would occur. No mitigation is required.

f) Less Than Significant

To facilitate construction and minimize any schedule delays due to utility relocations, Hobsonway would be constructed first as an initial phase. After Hobsonway and the utilities are relocated, construction of the new BPS facility and the majority of the new vehicle lanes would be constructed without impacting the westbound lanes of I-10. The existing BPS facility would remain operational during Project construction. Construction would then take place adjacent to the existing BPS facility to construct new westbound lanes along a new alignment. Transitions between the existing I-10 and new alignment to the new BPS facility would be constructed during off-peak periods and/or overnight to minimize traffic impacts. Upon completion of construction of the new BPS structures and new I-10 alignment, vehicles would be diverted to the new BPS facility. As the last stage of construction, the existing BPS facility would be demolished. part of the last phase of construction. Standard construction traffic management actions will be implemented as necessary to ensure the continued safe and efficient flow of traffic. Additionally, a draft Transportation Management Plan (TMP) would be prepared during final design and implemented during construction as detailed in **measure TR-1**, which would require notification of fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activities and implementation of a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project area through signage, detours, and flagmen. As access to and through the project area will be maintained throughout project-related construction activities, with implementation of **measure TR-1**, the Project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan, and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

[36] Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission. 2004. Riverside County Airport Land Use Plan. October. Website: www.rcaluc.org/Portals/13/PDFGeneral/plan/newplan/45-%20Vol.%203%20Blythe%20Municipal.pdf (accessed December 6, 2022).

g) No Impact

Per CAL FIRE's Fire Resource Assessment Program, the project site is not within an identified Fire Hazard Severity Zone[37]. Property in the vicinity of the Project site includes agricultural land, open space, and rural and mobile home residential uses. The Project is not adjacent or near an identified Wildland Urban Interface; therefore, the Project would not directly or indirectly expose persons or structures to increased wildland fire risk. Therefore, there would be **no impacts** associated with loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. No mitigation is required.

[37] CAL FIRE. n.d. Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Website: https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/ (accessed December 6, 2022).

3.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☒	☐
i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	☐	☐	☒	☐
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	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Geotechnical Investigation[38], Preliminary Drainage Report[39], Stormwater Data Report[40], and Water Quality Assessment Report[41]. This section analyzes potential impacts to hydrology and water quality.

a) Less Than Significant

Construction. The proposed project involves the demolition of the existing Blythe BPS facility and the construction of a new BPS facility, including related roadway realignments and improvements. Pollutants of concern during construction include sediments, trash, petroleum products, concrete waste (dry and wet), sanitary waste, and chemicals. During construction activities, excavated soil would be exposed, and there would be an increased

[38] Ninyo & Moore. 2022a. Geotechnical Design Report, Blythe Border Protection Station, Blythe, California. May 19.
[39] Psomas. 2022c. Final Drainage Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. December.
[40] Psomas. 2023. Stormwater Data Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. January.
[41] LSA. 2023b. Water Quality Assessment Report, CDFA Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project. February.

potential for soil erosion compared to existing conditions. In addition, chemicals, liquid products, and petroleum products (e.g., paints, solvents, and fuels), and concrete-related waste may be spilled or leaked and have the potential to be transported via storm runoff into receiving waters.

The total disturbed soil area during construction would be approximately 41 acres. Projects that disturb greater than 1 acre of soil are required to obtain coverage under California Statewide CGP Order No.2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002 as specified in **measure WQ-1**. The CGP requires preparation of a SWPPP and implementation of construction BMPs during construction activities. Construction BMPs would include, but not be limited to, Erosion Control and Sediment Control BMPs designed to minimize erosion and retain sediment on site and Good Housekeeping BMPs to prevent spills, leaks, and discharge of construction debris and waste into receiving waters. Implementation of **measure WQ-1** would ensure that construction-related impacts to surface water quality standards, waste discharge requirements, and surface water quality would be **less than significant**.

According to the Geotechnical Design Report completed for the Project[42], groundwater was encountered at relatively shallow depths across the project site, ranging between 14 to 26 feet below the ground surface. Groundwater levels are subject to variation due to seasonal rainfall, irrigation, groundwater pumping, subsurface stratigraphy, topography, and other conditions. Data from a groundwater monitoring well approximately 1.2 miles to the west of the site indicate depths to groundwater of 8 to 14 feet below ground surface.[43] Due to the relatively shallow depth to groundwater, it is anticipated that groundwater dewatering would be required during project construction. Groundwater dewatering activities could affect surface water quality through the discharge of polluted groundwater to surface waterbodies. Groundwater dewatering activities would be required to comply with the *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters within the California River Basin Region* (Order No. R7-2015-0006, NPDES No. CAG997001) (Groundwater Discharge Permit) as specified in **measure WQ-2**. If groundwater dewatering during construction is discharged to land, groundwater dewatering activities would be required to comply with the CGP, as specified in **measure WQ-1**. Under either of these permits, discharges must comply with discharge specifications, receiving water limitations, and monitoring and reporting requirements detailed in the respective permits.

Operation. Pollutants of concern during long-term operation of the proposed project include suspended solids/sediments, nutrients, pesticides, heavy metals, oil and grease, toxic organic compounds, and trash and debris. The proposed project would result in a net increase in new impervious surface area of 14.97 acres, including 10.58 acres inside Caltrans right-of-way and 4.39 acres outside Caltrans right-of-way.[44] An increase in impervious surface area would increase the volume of runoff during a storm, which would more effectively transport pollutants to receiving waters. In addition, an increase in impervious surface area would also increase the total amount of pollutants in the stormwater

42 Ninyo & Moore. 2022a. Geotechnical Design Report, Blythe Border Protection Station, Blythe, California. May 19.
43 Ibid.
44 Psomas. 2023. Stormwater Data Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. January.

runoff, which would increase the amount of pollutants traveling to on-site drainages and downstream receiving waters.

There are no existing BMP features along the project limits. The Project would implement post-construction requirements of the CGP and requirements of the *Statewide Stormwater Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for State of California Department of Transportation* (Order No. 2022-0033-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000003) (MS4 Permit), including Caltrans approved Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs to reduce the discharge of pollutants of concern to the maximum extent practicable both inside and outside of Caltrans' right-of-way, as detailed in **measures WQ-3 through WQ-6**. Treatment BMPs being proposed as part of the project include two vegetated infiltration basins and two drainage pollution prevention infiltration areas (DPPIA) to manage stormwater runoff and provide treatment to improve water quality. Overflows will be provided in each basin to provide positive drainage should inflows exceed infiltration capacity. At a minimum, basins will be designed to contain and infiltrate the runoff volume from the smallest storm up to the 85th percentile storm event for the new BPS facility and a portion of the new roadways. The DPPIAs will collect stormwater from I-10 and the existing and proposed on- and off-ramps on the western portion of the project site and treat it prior to infiltrating. Runoff from some portions of new roadway and from areas of repaving will continue to flow into adjacent unpaved areas per existing conditions. Design Pollution Prevention BMPs proposed as part of the project include collecting roadway runoff using dikes, curbs, and drainage swales, two design pollution prevention infiltration areas, minimizing cut-and-fill slopes, preserving existing vegetated slopes to the greatest extent possible, and replanting new slopes and disturbed areas with stabilizing vegetation.[45]

With compliance with the applicable NPDES requirements and implementation of BMPs during construction and operation of the proposed project, as stipulated in **measures -WQ-1** (compliance with the CGP), **WQ-2** (compliance with the Groundwater Discharge Permit), **WQ-3** (CGP Post Construction Requirements), **WQ-4** (California Department of Transportation MS4 Permit), **WQ-5** (California Department of Transportation approved Design Pollution Prevention BMPs) and **WQ-6** (California Department of Transportation approved Treatment BMPs), the proposed project would not violate groundwater quality standards, waste discharge requirements, or substantially degrade groundwater quality. Impacts would be **less than significant**, and no mitigation is required.

WQ-1 **Construction General Permit**. Prior to commencement of construction activities, the Construction Contractor shall obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities* (Construction General Permit [CGP]) NPDES No. CAS000002, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, or any other subsequent permit. This shall include submission of Permit Registration Documents (PRDs), including permit application fees, a Notice of Intent (NOI), and other compliance-related documents required by the permit, to the State Water Resources Control Board via the Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System (SMARTS). Construction activities shall not commence until a Waste Discharge Identification Number (WDID) is obtained for the project from SMARTS. Project construction shall comply with all

[45] Psomas. 2023. Stormwater Data Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. January.

applicable requirements specified in the Construction General Permit, including but not limited to, preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implementation of construction site best management practices (BMPs) to address all construction-related activities, equipment, and materials that have the potential to impact water quality for the appropriate risk level identified for the project. All work shall conform to the Construction Site BMP requirements specified in the latest edition of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Storm Water Quality Handbooks: Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual to control and minimize the impacts of construction and construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed. The SWPPP shall identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of stormwater and shall include Construction BMPs (e.g., Control and Sediment Control BMPs designed to minimize erosion and retain sediment on site and Good Housekeeping BMPs designed to prevent and contain spills and leaks) and prevent discharge of construction debris and waste into receiving waters.

Upon completion of construction activities and stabilization of the site, a Notice of Termination (NOT) shall be submitted via SMARTS.

WQ-2 **Groundwater Discharge Permit.** During groundwater dewatering activities, the Construction Contractor shall comply with the provisions of the *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters within the California River Basin Region* (Order No. R7-2015-0006, NPDES No. CAG997001). A Notice of Intent (NOI) shall be submitted to the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 45 days before the start of groundwater dewatering activities. The construction contractor shall be required to comply with discharge specifications, receiving water limitations, and monitoring and reporting requirements detailed in this permit for any discharge of groundwater and non-stormwater construction dewatering waste to surface waters that pose an insignificant threat to water quality in the Colorado River Basin region.

WQ-3 **Post-Construction General Permit Requirements.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are outside of the Caltrans right of way comply with the postconstruction requirements of the Construction General Permit, including designing the Project so that post-construction runoff is equal to or less than pre-project runoff for the 85th percentile storm event or the smallest storm event that generates runoff, whichever is larger.

WQ-4 **Caltrans MS4 Permit.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are within Caltrans right of way shall comply with the provisions of the NPDES Permit, Statewide Storm Water Permit for the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans Permit) Order No. 2022-0033-DWQ No. CAS000003 (adopted on June 22, 2022, and effective on January 1, 2023), or any subsequent permit.

WQ-5 **Design Pollution Prevention Best Management Practices.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are within the Caltrans right-of-way include Caltrans-approved Design Pollution

Prevention BMPs consistent with the requirements of the Caltrans Permit and Project Planning and Design Guide. Design Pollution Prevention BMPs, including bioinfiltration areas. Project construction shall not be deemed complete until the Design Pollution Prevention BMPs are installed and a long-term BMP maintenance plan is prepared.

WQ-6 **Treatment Best Management Practices.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are within the Caltrans right of way include Caltrans-approved Treatment BMPs consistent with the requirements of the Caltrans Permit and Project Planning and Design Guide, including biofiltration basins. Project construction shall not be deemed complete until the Treatment BMPs are installed and a long-term BMP maintenance plan is prepared.

b) Less Than Significant

The Project site is within the Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin. The groundwater basin is bounded by the Colorado River to the east, the Palo Verde Dam and Big Marina Mountains to the North, the Palo Verde Mesa to the west, and the Palo Verde Mountains to the south. The Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin covers approximately 128,000 acres or 200 square miles within Imperial and Riverside counties. The total storage capacity is estimated at 4,960,000 acre-feet. The Colorado River recharges the aquifer by seepage in some reaches and by seepage from canals and irrigated land that receive diversions from the Colorado River.[46]

According to the Geotechnical Design Report completed for the Project[47], groundwater was encountered at relatively shallow depths across the Project site, ranging between 14 to 26 feet bgs. Groundwater levels are subject to variation due to seasonal rainfall, irrigation, groundwater pumping, subsurface stratigraphy, topography, and other conditions. Data from a groundwater monitoring well approximately 1.2 miles to the west of the site indicate depths to groundwater of 8 to 14 feet bgs.[48] Due to the relatively shallow depth to groundwater, groundwater dewatering is anticipated to be required during project construction. However, groundwater dewatering would be localized and temporary, and the volume of groundwater removed would not be substantial. In addition, it is anticipated that any groundwater that is removed would be discharged to surface waters and therefore would be available for recharge. Therefore, there would be no net loss of groundwater. Furthermore, any volume of water removed during groundwater dewatering would be minimal compared to the size of the Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin, which has a surface area of 200 square miles and a storage capacity of 4,960,000 acre-feet.[49]

Drinking water for the city of Blythe is currently supplied by groundwater from the Palo Verde Groundwater Basin. As discussed under Checklist Question 3.20 (b), the City anticipates having sufficient water supplies available to serve the proposed Project. The Project would increase impervious surface areas on site by 14.97 acres, which can decrease infiltration.

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46 California Department of Water Resources, 2004. California's Groundwater Bulletin 118, Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin. February 27.

47 Ninyo & Moore, 2022. Geotechnical Design Report, Blythe Border Protection Station, Blythe, California. May 19.

48 Ibid.

49 California Department of Water Resources. Op. cit.

However, the Project would include two infiltration basins, two DPPIAs, and dikes, curbs, catch basins, and/or drainage swales to collect, treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff as stipulated by **measures WQ-3** (CGP Post Construction Requirements), **WQ-4** (California Department of Transportation MS4 Permit), **WQ-5** (California Department of Transportation-approved Design Pollution Prevention BMPs) and **WQ-6** (California Department of Transportation-approved Treatment BMPs). At a minimum, the infiltration basins would be designed to contain and infiltrate the runoff volume from the smallest storm up to the 85th percentile storm event for the new BPS facility and a portion of the new roadways.

With implementation of specified regulatory compliance measures, impacts related to depletion of groundwater supplies or interference with groundwater recharge in a manner that may impede sustainable groundwater management would be **less than significant.** No mitigation is required.

c) i) Less Than Significant

During construction activities, approximately 41 acres of soil would be disturbed. Soil would be exposed and drainage patterns would be temporarily altered during grading and other construction activities, and there would be an increased potential for soil erosion and siltation compared to existing conditions. Additionally, during a storm event, soil erosion and siltation could occur at an accelerated rate. As discussed above in Section 3.10 (a), the CGP requires the preparation of a SWPPP to identify construction BMPs to be implemented as part of the proposed project to reduce impacts on water quality during construction, including impacts associated with soil erosion and siltation. As specified in **measure WQ-1**, the Project would comply with the requirements of the CGP. With compliance with the requirements in the CGP and implementation of the construction BMPs as specified in **measure-WQ-1**, construction impacts related to on- or off-site erosion or siltation would be **less than significant.** No mitigation is required.

The Project would result in a net increase of impervious surface area of 14.97 acres, including 10.58 acres inside Caltrans right-of-way and 4.39 outside Caltrans right of way, which would result in a net increase in stormwater runoff that could lead to downstream erosion in receiving waters (Colorado River and canals). According to the Stormwater Data Report prepared for the Project, the proposed drainage system would preserve the existing drainage pattern on site. Additionally, the Project would implement post-construction requirements of the CGP and requirements of the MS4 Permit, including Caltrans approved Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs to reduce the discharge of pollutants of concern to the maximum extent practicable both inside and outside of Caltrans' right-of-way, as detailed in **measures WQ-3 through WQ-6**. As previously discussed, the Project would include two vegetated infiltration basins and two DPPIAs that would target pollutants of concern in stormwater runoff during operation. These BMPs would reduce the total amount of sediment in stormwater runoff, which would reduce the downstream transport of sediment in stormwater runoff. Additionally, the Project would implement Caltrans-approved Design Pollution Prevention BMPs, including collecting roadway runoff using dikes, curbs, and drainage swales, two design pollution prevention infiltration areas, minimizing cut-and-fill slopes, preserving existing vegetated slopes to the greatest extent possible, and replanting new slopes and disturbed areas with stabilizing vegetation.[50]

[50] Psomas. 2023. Stormwater Data Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. January.

Therefore, with adherence to **measures WQ-1, and WQ-3 through WQ-6**, the Project would not result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site, and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) ii) Less Than Significant

During construction activities, approximately 41 acres of soil would be disturbed. The Project would not physically alter the course of a stream or river and would not significantly alter the existing drainage pattern on site. As discussed previously, project construction would comply with the requirements of the CGP and would include the preparation and implementation of a SWPPP as detailed in **measure WQ-1**. The SWPPP would include construction BMPs to control and direct on-site surface runoff and would include detention facilities, if required to ensure that stormwater runoff from the construction site does not exceed the capacity of the stormwater drainage systems. With implementation of BMPs, construction impacts related to a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff that would result in flooding would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

The proposed project would result in a net increase of impervious surface area of approximately 14.97 acres, including 10.58 acres inside Caltrans right-of-way and 4.39 outside Caltrans right-of-way, which would result in a net increase in stormwater runoff that could lead to flooding. According to the Stormwater Data Report prepared for the Project, the proposed drainage system would preserve the existing drainage pattern on site. As previously discussed, the Project would include two vegetated infiltration basins and two DPPIAs that would be sized appropriately to accommodate the design storm so that flooding would not occur. Outflow risers will be provided in each basin to allow the release of stormwater that exceeds the design volume of the basin. At a minimum, basins will be designed to contain and infiltrate the runoff volume from the smallest storm up to the 85th percentile storm event for the new BPS facility and a portion of the new roadways.[51]

With adherence to **measures WQ-1, and WQ-3 through WQ-6**, project impacts related to on- or off-site flooding from an increase in surface runoff would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) iii) Less Than Significant

As discussed previously, pollutants of concern during construction include sediments, trash, petroleum products, concrete waste (dry and wet), sanitary waste, and chemicals. Each of these pollutants on its own or in combination with other pollutants can have a detrimental effect on water quality. Drainage patterns would be temporarily altered during grading and other construction activities, and construction-related pollutants could be spilled, leaked, or transported via storm runoff into adjacent drainages and downstream receiving waters. However, as specified in **measure WQ-1**, the Project would be required to comply with the requirements set forth by the CGP and SWPPP, which would specify BMPs to be implemented to control the discharge of pollutants in stormwater runoff as a result of construction activities. The SWPPP would also include construction BMPs to control and direct on-site surface runoff and would include detention facilities, if required, to ensure that stormwater runoff from the construction site does not exceed the capacity of the stormwater drainage systems.

[51] Psomas. 2022c. Final Drainage Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. December

Pollutants of concern during long-term operations of the Project include suspended solids/ sediments, nutrients, pesticides, heavy metals, oil and grease, toxic organic compounds, and trash and debris. The Project would result in a net increase in new impervious surface area of 14.97 acres, including 10.58 acres inside Caltrans right-of-way and 4.39 acres outside Caltrans right-of-way.[52] An increase in impervious surface area would increase the volume of runoff during a storm, which would more effectively transport pollutants to receiving waters. In addition, an increase in impervious surface area would also increase the total amount of pollutants in the stormwater runoff, which would increase the amount of pollutants traveling to on-site drainages and downstream receiving waters.

The Project would implement post construction requirements of the CGP and requirements of the MS4 Permit, including Caltrans approved Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs to reduce the discharge of pollutants of concern to the maximum extent practicable both inside and outside of Caltrans' right-of-way, as detailed in **measures WQ-3 through WQ-6**. Treatment BMPs being proposed as part of the project include two vegetated infiltration basins and two DPPIAs to manage stormwater runoff and provide treatment to improve water quality that would be sized appropriately to ensure that the capacity of existing and proposed stormwater drainage systems are not exceeded. At a minimum, basins will be designed to contain and infiltrate the runoff volume from the smallest storm up to the 85th percentile storm event for the new BPS facility and a portion of the new roadways. Design Pollution Prevention BMPs proposed as part of the project include collecting roadway runoff using dikes, curbs, and drainage swales, two design pollution prevention infiltration areas, minimizing cut-and-fill slopes, preserving existing vegetated slopes to the greatest extent possible, and replanting new slopes and disturbed areas with stabilizing vegetation.[53]

Therefore, with adherence to **measures WQ-1, and WQ-3 through WQ-6**, Project impacts associated with the introduction of substantial sources of polluted runoff or additional runoff would be **less than significant** and the proposed project would not result in an exceedance in capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. No mitigation is required.

c) iv) No Impact

The proposed project area is not within a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 100-year floodplain. According to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06065C3235G, August 28, 2008, the project footprint is within Zone D, which is defined by FEMA as an "Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard", and an area where "flood hazards are undetermined, but possible". No special considerations are required for development in Zone D areas with regards to a FEMA regulated floodplain.

As noted above, the Project would match drainage patterns and areas to that of existing conditions. Furthermore, the project is not in a FEMA flood zone or flood hazard area. Due to the low flood risk and the preservation of existing drainage patterns and conditions, the Project would not alter the existing drainage pattern on site, and flood flows would not be impeded or redirected. As such, **no impact** would occur. No mitigation is required.

[52] Psomas. 2023. Stormwater Data Report for Blythe Border Protection Station. January
[53] Ibid.

d) No Impact

As previously discussed, the Project area is not within a FEMA designated 100-year floodplain. According to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06065C3235G, August 28, 2008, the project footprint is within Zone D, which is defined by FEMA as an "Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard", and an area where "flood hazards are undetermined, but possible". No special considerations are required for development in Zone D areas with regards to a FEMA regulated floodplain. During construction, BMPs would be implemented to ensure that during a rain event, pollutants would be retained on site and be prevented from reaching downstream receiving waters. During operations, vegetated infiltration basins and DPPIAs would provide storm water treatment and peak flow mitigation. At a minimum, basins will be designed to contain and infiltrate the runoff volume from the smallest storm up to the 85th percentile storm event for the new BPS facility and a portion of the new roadways. Therefore, the Project would not result in the release of pollutants due to inundation caused by flooding, and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Seiching is a phenomenon that occurs when seismic ground shaking induces standing waves (seiches) inside water retention facilities such as reservoirs and water tanks. Such waves can cause retention structures to fail and flood downstream properties. There are several small ponds approximately 8.5 miles west of the project site within the City Blythe. The nearest sizeable enclosed bodies of water are the Salton Sea and Lake Havasu, both of which are more than 50 miles from the project site. The Project site is not within any dam breach inundation areas.[54] Due to the distance of the Project site from the nearest enclosed waterbodies, there are **no impacts** associated with the risk of pollutants due to project inundation from a seiche. No mitigation is required.

Tsunamis are generated wave trains generally caused by tectonic displacement of the sea floor associated with shallow earthquakes, sea floor landslides, rock falls, and exploding volcanic islands. The Project site is not located in a tsunami inundation area as identified by California Department of Conservation Tsunami Inundation Maps.[55] Due to the distance of the Project from the Pacific Ocean (greater than 100 miles) and its location outside any tsunami inundation areas, there are **no impacts** associated with the risk of pollutants due to project inundation from tsunamis. No mitigation is required.

e) No Impact

As previously discussed, the Project site is within the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The Colorado River RWQCB adopted a Basin Plan that designates beneficial uses for all surface and groundwater within its jurisdiction and establishes the water quality objectives and standards necessary to protect those beneficial uses. The Project would implement construction and post construction requirements of the CGP and requirements of the MS4 Permit, including Caltrans approved Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs to reduce the discharge of pollutants of concern to the maximum extent practicable both inside and outside of Caltrans' right of way,

[54] California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams. Dam Breach Inundation Map Web Publisher. Website: https://fmds.water.ca.gov/webgis/?appid=dam_prototype_v2 (accessed December 19, 2022).

[55] California Department of Conservation (DOC). 2019. California Tsunami Maps and Data. Website: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/tsunami/maps (accessed November 17, 2022).

as detailed in **measures WQ-1 through WQ-6**. Compliance with these regulatory requirements would ensure that the Project would not degrade or alter water quality, causing the receiving waters to exceed the water quality objectives, or impair the beneficial use of receiving waters. Therefore, the Project would not result in water quality impacts that would conflict with the Basin Plan. In the absence of any conflict with Basin Plan, **no impact** would occur; therefore, no mitigation is required.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which was enacted in September 2014, requires governments and water agencies of high- and medium-priority basins to halt overdraft of groundwater basins. The SGMA requires the formation of local GSAs, which are required to adopt Groundwater Sustainability Plans to manage the sustainability of the groundwater basins. As previously discussed, the project lies within the Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin. The California Department of Water Resources designates the Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin as very low priority.[56] Therefore, a sustainable groundwater management plan has not been finalized for the Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin. Nevertheless, as discussed in Section 3.10(b), the project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. Additionally, implementation of construction BMPs and the proposed vegetated infiltration basins and DPPIAs would provide storm water treatment and prevent pollutant entry into the groundwater basin. The Project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of a sustainable groundwater management plan; therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

[56] California Department of Water Resources. 2020. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2019 Basin Prioritization Process and Results. May.

3.11 Land Use and Planning

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

The following discussion is based in part on the Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project, Community Impact Assessment.[57]

a) No Impact

The existing BPS facility is being relocated and updated to provide an updated facility that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities. The new BPS facility would be relocated approximately 0.66 mile west of the existing facility. Improvements would include (1) the demolition of the existing BPS facility, (2) construction of the replacement BPS facility, (3) realignment and widening of the existing westbound I-10 lanes, (4) the realignment of Hobsonway, (5) the relocation of the existing I-10 on-/off-ramps, and (6) the installation of ancillary features (e.g., parking, drainage, and utility features). The alignment of I-10 would be adjusted to divert vehicles to inspection booths at the relocated BPS facility.

Existing uses to the north of the Project site include Hobsonway, agricultural land, irrigation canals, a mobile home community (Blythe Marina Estates), and Quechan Park, while uses to the south of the Project site include eastbound I-10, East Donlon Street, agricultural land, and the Cove RV Resort. The Colorado River Bridge, spanning the border between California and Arizona, is east of the Project site. Agricultural land (with a single dwelling) is directly west of the project area, with a mobile home community farther west. The Intake Boulevard Interchange at I-10 is approximately 4,000 feet west of the project limits.

As I-10 and local streets are existing features in the Project area, and because the Project will be built within and adjacent to the existing BPS facility and primarily within the Caltrans right of way, implementation of the Project would not physically divide an existing community, and **no impacts** related to this issue would occur. No mitigation is required.

[57] LSA Associates, Inc. 2022a. Community Impact Assessment, Blythe Border Protection Station Project. July.

b) No Impact

The City of Blythe General Plan and the Colorado River Corridor Plan (CRCP)[58] designate land uses with the intent to guide future development in the City. Current land use at the Study Area[59] is predominantly (77 percent) agricultural. The eastern portion of the project area is within the CRCP, which has designated land within the Study Area for Public/Quasi-Public, Open Space, Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial, and Commercial Office uses (**Refer to Figure 3.11-1**). The western portion of the Study Area designated under the City's General Plan and zoned for a variety of residential densities, commercial, and agricultural uses (**Refer to Figure 3.11-2**).

The existing Blythe BPS facility would be demolished and replaced with a facility, approximately 0.66 mile to the west of the existing BPS facility, that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities and to a location that improves traffic operations along westbound I-10. The existing BPS facility is within the Caltrans right-of-way for I-10. The Project includes the realignment and widening of I-10 to divert vehicles through the new facility, retaining the BPS' location with the Caltrans right-of-way. Ancillary improvements outside the Caltrans right-of-way include the realignment of Hobsonway, utility relocations, and the installation of ancillary facility improvements (e.g., parking, drainage, utility features). As all project features and improvements support the continuation of existing border enforcement functions (albeit at a different location), the Project would not conflict with the City's General Plan or the CRCP. The environmental effects that may result from the construction and operation of replacement facility, including any necessary and appropriate mitigation, are addressed within the appropriate issue-specific analysis included in this Initial Study.

The Project would relocate the BPS west and north of its existing location, requiring the realignment of Hobsonway to the north and the existing I-10 on-/off-ramps to the west into areas designated as General Commercial and Public/Quasi Public under the City's CRCP. Areas of the existing BPS facility no longer within Caltrans right-of-way will be transferred to the City for public uses. As stated previously, the current and future Blythe BPS facilities are necessary public facilities. The continued operation of the relocated BPS facility does not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and there would be **no impacts**. No mitigation is required.

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58 The City prepared the CRCP to visualize growth within the plan area. The CRCP includes more than 12 miles of river frontage and encompasses approximately 6,000 acres. Lands within the CRCP include those within the existing Blythe city limits as well as its Sphere of Influence, which extends west, south, and north of the City limits and includes those areas that the Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission has identified as being within the City's probable future boundaries.

59 For this discussion, "Study Area" is the area in which primary or secondary community impacts would occur. The Study Area for the project encompasses 1,866 acres and extends up to 0.5 mile from the project.

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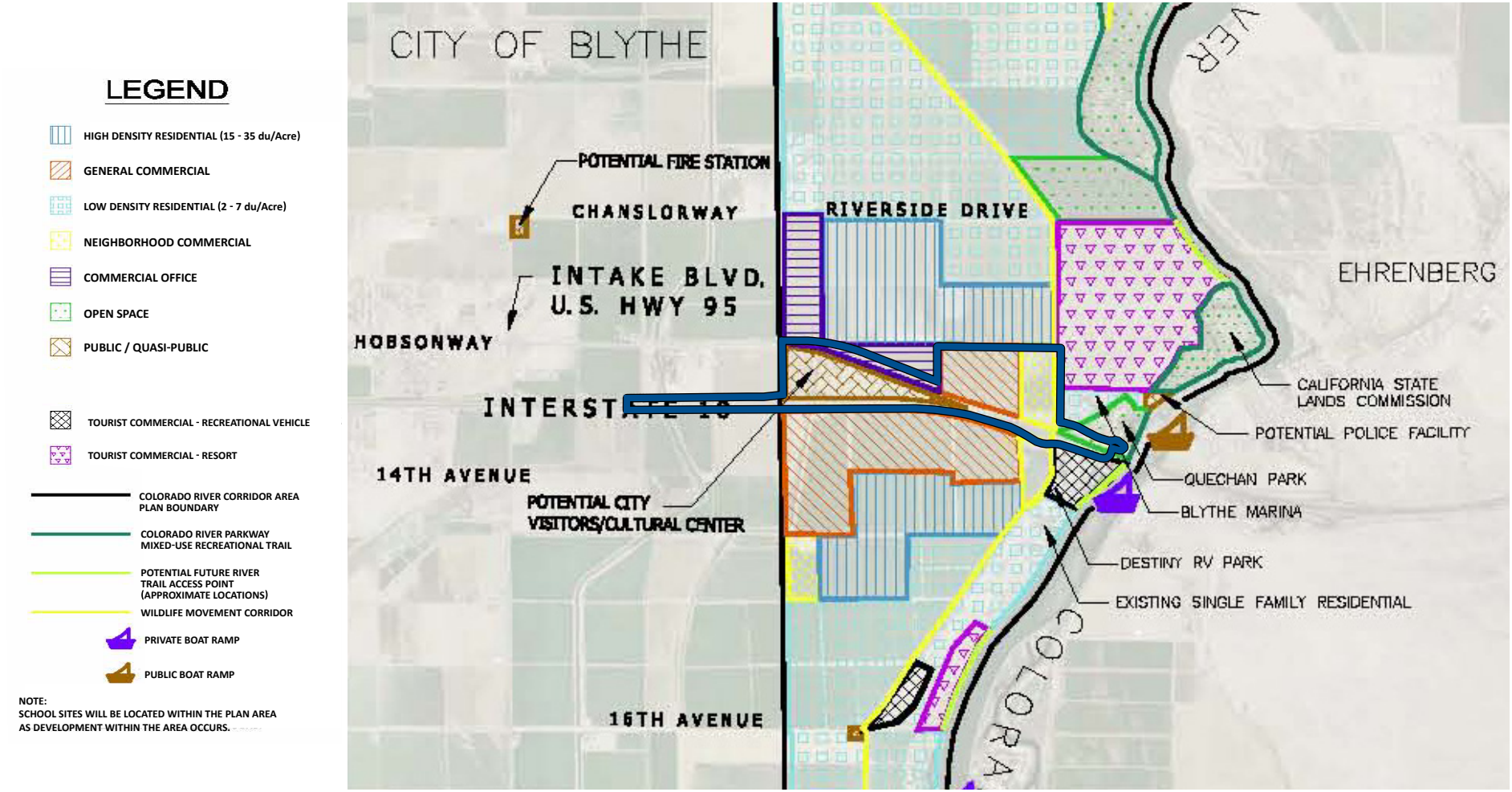

LEGEND

Project Area

FIGURE 3.11-1

Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project

Colorado River Corridor Plan Land Uses

SOURCE: The Holt Group

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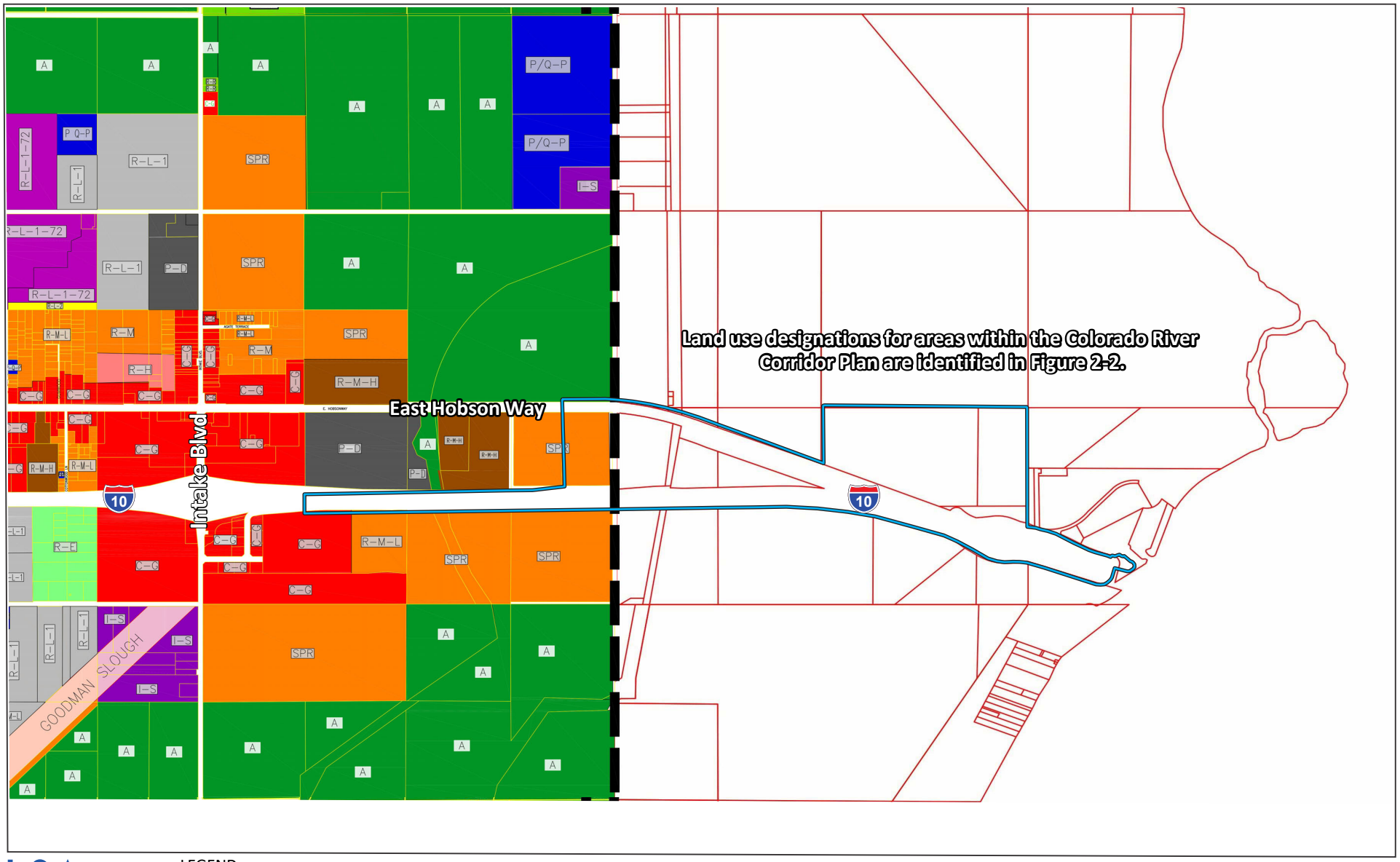

LSA

FIGURE 3.11-2

LEGEND

- Zone A Agriculture
- Zone R-R Rural Residential
- Zone R-E Residential Estate
- Zone R-L-1 Low Density Residential (7800 sq ft lots)
- Zone R-L-1-72 Low Density Residential (7200 sq ft lots)
- Zone R-L-2 Low Density Residential (6000 sq ft lots)
- Zone R-M-L Medium to Low Density Residential
- Zone R-M Medium Density Residential
- Zone R-H High Density Residential
- Zone R-M-H Residential Mobile Home
- Zone P-D Planned Development
- Zone C-G General Commercial
- Zone C-C Community Commercial
- Zone C-N Neighborhood Commercial
- Zone I-S Service Industrial
- Zone I-G General Industrial
- Zone SPR Specific Plan Resort
- Zone PQP Public/Quasi
- Project Area

N

0 800 1600

FEET

SOURCE: Perkins &Will

Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project

City of Blythe General Plan and Land Use Map

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3.12 Mineral Resources

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

a) No Impact

Based on guidelines adopted by the California Geological Survey, areas known as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZ) are classified according to the presence or absence of significant deposits, as defined below. The California State Geologist uses the following MRZ categories to classify the State's lands.

- **MRZ-1:** Areas where adequate geologic information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence. This zone is applied where well developed lines of reasoning, based on economic-geologic principles and adequate data, indicate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is nil or slight.
- **MRZ-2a:** Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic data show that significant measured or indicated resources are present. Areas classified MRZ-2a contain discovered mineral deposits that are either measured or indicated reserves as determined by such evidence as drilling records, sample analysis, surface exposure, and mine information. Land included in the MRZ-2a category is of prime importance because it contains known economic mineral deposits.
- **MRZ-2b:** Areas underlain by mineral deposits where geologic information indicates that significant inferred resources are present. Areas classified MRZ-2b contain discovered deposits that are either inferred reserves or deposits that are presently sub-economic as determined by limited sample analysis, exposure, and past mining history.
- **MRZ-3a:** Areas containing known mineral deposits that may qualify as mineral resources. MRZ-3a areas are considered to have a moderate potential for the discovery of economic mineral deposits.
- **MRZ-3b:** Areas containing inferred mineral deposits that may qualify as mineral resources. Land classified MRZ-3b represents areas in geologic settings which appear to be favorable environments for the occurrence of specific mineral deposits.
- **MRZ-4:** Areas where geologic information does not rule out either the presence or absence of mineral resources. The MRZ-4 classification does not imply that there is little likelihood for the presence of mineral resources, but rather there is a lack of knowledge regarding mineral occurrence.

The project area is designated MRZ-4[60], a designation that does not rule out either the presence or absence of mineral resources. The City's General Plan states that, although several areas along Midland Road (approximately 7 miles north/northwest of the project site) were historically mined for gypsum and gravel, there are no active mines within the City. No mineral resources or active mining operations have been identified at the Project site Therefore, the Project would have **no impacts** associated with the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. No mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

Neither the City's General Plan, Zoning Map, nor the CRCP include a mineral resource resource/recovery designation. The Project site is on and adjacent to the current alignment of I-10 and Hobsonway in areas designated for Open Space, Agriculture and Medium Density Residential Uses. Because the Project is not designated as a land use category that allows for mineral extraction, the Project would have **no impacts** associated with 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 mitigation is required.

[60] California Geological Survey. 1994. Mineral Classification of Eastern Riverside County, California.

3.13 Noise

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

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the Noise Study Report[61].

Existing Setting. Noise-sensitive receptors include residences, schools, hospitals, and similar uses that are sensitive to noise. Sensitivity to noise increases during the evening and at night. Noise-sensitive land uses close to the Project include single-family residences, an RV park, and recreational uses. Non-noise-sensitive land uses in the project area include undeveloped land and agricultural uses. The existing noise environment in the project area is influenced by traffic noise on I-10, Hobsonway, and Donlon Street.

Discussion

a) Less Than Significant

Temporary Impacts. Two types of short-term noise impacts could occur during construction of the Project. First, construction crew commutes and the transport of construction equipment and materials to the site for the Project would incrementally increase noise levels on access roads leading to the site. Although there would be a relatively high single-event noise exposure potential causing intermittent noise nuisance (passing trucks at 50 feet would generate up to a maximum of 84 dBA shown in Table 3.13.1, the effect on longer-term (hourly or daily) ambient noise levels would be small. Based on CalEEMod (Version 2020.4.0) in Appendix A of the Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report[62], the building construction phase would generate the most trips out of all of the construction phases, at 326 vehicles per day. I-10 would be used to access the project site. The existing average daily traffic volume on I-10 is 31,641[63]. Based on the information above, construction-related traffic would increase traffic noise levels by up to 0.04 dBA on I-10.

61 LSA Associates, Inc. 2023c. Noise Study Report, Blythe Border Protection Station Project. June.
62 LSA Associates, Inc. 2023a. Blythe Border Protection Station Project Air Quality Report. January.
63 Psomas. 2022b. Blythe Border Protection Station Traffic Operations Analysis Report. November.

Table 3.13.1: Typical Construction Equipment Noise Levels

Equipment Description	Acoustical Usage Factor[1]	Maximum Noise Level (L_{max}) at 50 ft[2]
Backhoe	40	80
Compactor (ground)	20	80
Compressor	40	80
Crane	16	85
Dozer	40	85
Dump Truck	40	84
Excavator	40	85
Flatbed Truck	40	84
Forklift	20	85
Front-End Loader	40	80
Grader	40	85
Impact Pile Driver	20	95
Jackhammer	20	85
Pickup Truck	40	55
Pneumatic Tools	50	85
Pump	50	77
Rock Drill	20	85
Roller	20	85
Scraper	40	85
Tractor	40	84
Welder	40	73

Source: FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook, Table 9.1 (FHWA 2006).
Note: The noise levels reported in this table are rounded to the nearest whole number.
[1] Usage factor is the percentage of time during a construction noise operation that a piece of construction equipment is operating at full power.
[2] Maximum noise levels were developed based on Spec 721.560 from the CA/T program to be consistent with the City of Boston, Massachusetts, Noise Code for the "Big Dig" project.
CA/T = Central Artery/Tunnel
FHWA = United States Federal Highway Administration
ft = foot/feet
L_{max} = maximum instantaneous noise level

A noise level increase of less than 3 dBA would not be perceptible to the human ear in an outdoor environment. Therefore, short-term construction-related impacts associated with worker commute and equipment transport to the project site would be **less than significant**.

The second type of short-term noise impact is related to noise generated during grubbing/land clearing, grading/excavation, drainage/utilities, and paving on site. Construction performed in various sequential phases would change the character of the noise generated on site. Therefore, the noise levels vary as construction progresses. Despite the variety in the type and size of construction equipment, similarities in the dominant noise sources and patterns of operation allow construction-related noise ranges to be categorized by work phase. Table A lists the maximum noise levels (L_{max}) recommended for noise impact assessments for typical construction equipment included in the FHWA Highway Construction Noise Handbook[64], based on a distance of 50 feet between the equipment and a noise receptor.

Typical noise levels at 50 ft from an active construction area range up to 86 dBA maximum instantaneous noise level (L_{max}) during the noisiest construction phases. The site

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

preparation phase, which includes grading and paving, tends to generate the highest noise levels because the noisiest construction equipment is earthmoving equipment. Earthmoving equipment includes excavating machinery (e.g., backfillers, bulldozers, and front loaders). Earthmoving and compacting equipment includes compactors, scrapers, and graders.

Construction of the Project is expected to require the use of earthmovers, bulldozers, water trucks, and pickup trucks. Noise associated with the use of construction equipment is estimated between 75 and 84 dBA L_{max} at a distance of 50 feet from the active construction area for the grading phase. As seen in Table 3.13-1, the maximum noise level generated by each scraper is assumed to be approximately 84 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet from the scraper in operation. Each bulldozer would generate approximately 82 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. The maximum noise level generated by water trucks and pickup trucks is approximately 75 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet from these vehicles. Each doubling of the sound source with equal strength increases the noise level by 3 dBA. Each piece of construction equipment operates as an individual point source. The worst-case composite noise level at the nearest residence during this phase of construction would be 86 dBA L_{max} (at a distance of 50 feet from an active construction area).

The closest sensitive receptors within 50 feet of Project construction areas are the mobile homes east of the Project site along Hobsonway, which may be subject to short-term noise higher than 86 dBA L_{max} generated by construction activities. Although the noise generated by project construction activities would be higher than the ambient noise levels, construction noise would stop once project construction is completed. Implementation of **measures N-1 through N-4**, listed below, would minimize construction noise. Therefore, noise generated from project construction activities would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

The following measures will be implemented during project construction:

N-1 **Allowable Construction Hours.** The construction contractor's operations between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. shall not exceed 86 dBA L_{max} at a distance of 50 feet to comply with Section 14-8.02 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications[65].

N-2 **Muffler Maintenance.** During all project site excavation and grading, the project contractors shall equip all construction equipment, fixed or mobile, with properly operating and maintained mufflers consistent with manufacturers' standards.

N-3 **Equipment Staging.** The construction contractor shall locate equipment staging in areas that will create the greatest distance between construction-related noise sources and most noise-sensitive receptors nearest the project site during all project construction.

N-4 **Location of Stationary Construction Equipment.** The construction contractor shall place all stationary construction equipment so that the emitted noise is directed away from the sensitive receptors nearest the project site.

[65] Caltrans. 2018. Standard Specifications, Section 14-8.02.

Operational Impacts. The CEQA noise analysis is a strictly baseline-versus-build comparison to determine if noise increases brought about by the Project are significant. Significance is determined by examining the setting of the noise impact and how large or perceptible any noise increase would be in the given area. Considerations include the uniqueness of the setting, the sensitive nature of the noise receptors, the magnitude of the noise increase, number of residences affected, and the absolute noise level.

Table 3.13.2 shows the traffic noise level increase at each noise-sensitive receptor within the noise study area based on Alternative 1 (Build Alternative) as compared to existing baseline conditions. As shown in Table 3.13.2, traffic noise would increase by up to 3.2 dBA at noise-sensitive receptors. Since noise increases do not reach 12 dBA, which is generally accepted as the threshold for determining a significant noise impact for the purposes of a CEQA analysis, operational noise impacts are determined to be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

b) Less Than Significant

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

The Caltrans Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual[66] shows that the vibration damage threshold for continuous/frequent intermittent sources is 0.25 peak-particle velocity (PPV) (inches per second [in/sec]) for historic and old buildings. The manual shows the vibration annoyance potential criteria to be barely perceptible at 0.01 PPV (in/sec), distinctly perceptible at 0.04 PPV (in/sec), and strongly perceptible at 0.10 PPV (in/sec) for continuous/frequent intermittent sources. These thresholds were used to evaluate the potential for short-term construction-related ground-borne vibration during construction of the Project.

Bulldozers and loaded trucks used for construction of the proposed project would generate the highest ground-borne vibration levels. Based on the Caltrans' Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual[67], a large bulldozer and loaded trucks would generate vibration levels of 0.089 PPV (in/sec) and 0.076 PPV (in/sec), respectively, when measured at 25 feet. Based on the worst-case condition, the closest structure from the project construction boundary is approximately 80 feet. At this distance, the closest structure would experience a vibration level of up to 0.016 PPV (in/sec). This vibration level would be the barely perceptible and would not exceed the damage threshold of 0.25 PPV (in/sec) for historic and old buildings. Therefore, short-term construction impacts related to ground-borne vibration would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

[66] Caltrans. 2020. Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual. April.
[67] Ibid.

Table 3.13.2: Traffic Noise Levels

Receptor No.	Land Use	Noise Level (dBA L_{eq})		Alternative 1 Minus Existing (dBA)
		Existing	Alternative 1	
R-1	Recreational	68.7	69.6	0.9
R-2	Residential	62.4	63.6	1.2
R-3	Residential	64.8	64.8	0.0
R-4	Residential	68.4	66.9	-1.5
R-5	Residential	62.1	63.2	1.1
R-6	Residential	64.5	65.5	1.0
R-7	Recreational	61.5	63.1	1.6
R-8	Undeveloped	67.8	69.6	1.8
R-9	Agriculture	64.8	70.7	5.9
R-10	Agriculture	61.3	68.4	7.1
R-11	RV Park	65.8	68.2	2.4
R-12	RV Park	66.6	69.1	2.5
R-13	RV Park	66.8	69.3	2.5
R-14	RV Park	67.2	69.6	2.4
R-15	RV Park	64.2	66.5	2.3
R-16	RV Park	64.9	67.1	2.2
R-17	RV Park	65.3	67.5	2.2
R-18	RV Park	65.6	67.9	2.3
R-19	RV Park	65.9	68.2	2.3
R-20	Agriculture	67.2	69.3	2.1
R-21	Agriculture	73.6	75.1	1.5
R-22	Agriculture	71.6	73.9	2.3
R-23	Agriculture	71.7	74.0	2.3
R-24	Undeveloped	63.7	68.2	4.5
R-25	Agriculture	72.0	74.2	2.2
R-26	Agriculture	75.4	77.6	2.2
R-27	Agriculture	75.0	77.4	2.4
R-28	Residential	74.0	76.6	2.6
R-29	Residential	73.1	75.6	2.5
R-30	Residential	60.3	62.9	2.6
R-31	Residential	70.5	73.1	2.6
R-32	Residential	66.5	69.3	2.8
R-33	Residential	68.8	71.5	2.7
R-34	Residential	67.9	70.6	2.7
R-35	Agriculture	73.9	76.3	2.4
R-36	Agriculture	59.7	63.0	3.3
R-37	Agriculture	54.3	57.2	2.9
R-38	Agriculture	53.9	57.2	3.3
R-39	Agriculture	60.3	63.6	3.3
R-40	Residential	61.7	64.8	3.1
R-41	Residential	59.3	62.5	3.2

Source: LSA Associates, Inc. 2023c. Noise Study Report. June.
dBA = A-weighted decibels
L_{eq} = equivalent continuous noise level

Operational Impacts. Once operational, the Project would not generate any additional traffic, and regional traffic trips are expected to remain the same. Roads are not typically major sources of ground-borne noise or vibration. Ground-borne vibration is mostly associated with passenger vehicles and trucks traveling on roads with poor conditions (e.g., potholes, bumps, expansion joints, or other discontinuities in the road surface). Vibration effects of passenger vehicles and trucks (e.g., rattling of windows) are almost always a result of airborne noise. The Project would include new asphalt pavement with proper

maintenance. As a result, there would be no potholes, bumps, or other discontinuities in the road surface that would generate ground-borne vibration or noise impacts from vehicular traffic traveling on I-10. Therefore, ground-borne vibration and noise impacts generated by vehicles traveling through the project would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) No Impact

The closest airport to the project area is Blythe Airport, which is approximately 8.5 miles west of the project. The project area is outside the 55 dBA CNEL impact zone based on the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan[68] for Blythe Airport. In addition, the Project is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip. Therefore, the Project would not expose people residing or working in the project vicinity to excessive aviation-related noise levels, and **no impacts** would occur. No mitigation is required.

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

3.14 Population and Housing

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

a) No Impact

The Project involves the replacement of the existing Blythe BPS facility and does not include a residential component; therefore, no direct increase in City's population would result from project implementation. It is anticipated that personnel at the existing BPS facility will continue to staff the new facility. Construction of the Project would provide short-term construction jobs. These construction jobs would be temporary and would be specific to the variety of construction activities. The workforce would include a mix of craftspeople, such as cement finishers, ironworkers, welders, carpenters, electricians, painters, and laborers. Generally, construction workers are only at a job site for the time frame in which their specific skills are needed to complete that phase of construction. Therefore, the construction workers would not be expected to relocate or otherwise directly or indirectly alter the City's existing or project population.

As I-10, Hobsonway, the Hobsonway ramps and in-street utilities currently exist, the realignment and/or relocation of these facilities do not represent an extension of new roads or infrastructure that would indirectly facilitate unplanned growth.

Because the project would not directly or indirectly induce unplanned population growth in the City, **no impact** would occur. No mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

While the Project does include the acquisition of a limited amount of right-of-way, the Project does not require the relocation of any existing residential structures; therefore, the Project would not displace persons or housing. In the absence of any such displacement, there would be **no impacts**. No mitigation is required.

3.15 Public Services

	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) i) No Impact

Fire protection and prevention services are provided to the project area by the Blythe Fire Department and the Riverside County Fire Department (RCFD)/CAL FIRE through an automatic aid agreement. The RCFD partners with 21 cities for contract services and operates under a Regional Fire Protection Program, allowing all their fire stations to provide support as necessary regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. There are three fire stations within the City of Blythe. The closest fire department to the Project site is at 140 West Barnard Street, approximately 2.7 miles northwest of the Project site. The Blythe Fire Department is composed of 29 staff members, including 1 fire chief, 1 fire chief assistant, 6 fire engineers, 5 fire captains, and 16 firemen.[69]

As noted in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not result in a direct or indirect increase to the City's population and personnel at the existing BPS would continue to operate the new facility. The proposed land use would be consistent with existing conditions and the Project does not conflict with the intent of the City's General Plan Land Use, Zoning Regulations, or growth projections. Therefore, the Project would not result in an increase in demand for fire protection services. Additionally, the Project would be required to comply with all applicable codes for fire safety and emergency access and Project plans would be submitted to the Fire Department for review and approval prior to the issuance of building permits to ensure the Project would conform to applicable building and fire codes.

The City of Blythe Fire Department would continue providing services to the Project site and would not require additional firefighters to serve the Project. The Project would not significantly affect existing response times or result in an increase in demand for service. Therefore, the Project would not require the construction of a new or expanded fire station.

[69] City of Blythe. n.d.-a. Fire Department (On Call). Website: https://www.cityofblythe.ca.gov/Directory.aspx?did=87 (accessed December 14, 2022).

Therefore, construction and operation of the Project would have **no impact** on fire protection and safety services and facilities. No mitigation is required.

a) ii) No Impact

The City of Blythe Police Department (BPD), Riverside County Sheriff's Department, and California Highway Patrol (CHP) provide police protection services to the Project site and surrounding areas. The BPD is at 240 North Spring Street, approximately 2.7 miles northwest of the Project site. The BPD's service area covers all areas within the City limits (approximately 27 square miles). The BPD is composed of 31 staff members, 18 of which are patrol officers.[70] According to the City of Blythe General Plan, the BPD does not maintain a standard for emergency response times, but officers respond immediately to all emergency calls and response times can range from 1 minute to 10 minutes. The City of Blythe contracts for secondary backup services with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, which is adjacent to the BPD at 260 North Spring Street. The total Riverside County Sheriff's Department service area encompasses approximately 3,000 square miles and the response time varies depending on the distance from normal patrol areas. The CHP has patrol jurisdiction on freeways in the State of California, including I-10. The project area is in the service area of the Blythe CHP Office, located at 430 South Broadway in the City (approximately 1.7 miles west of the project area). Although there are no CHP offices in the Study Area, CHP officers occasionally use the Blythe BPS facility as a law enforcement checkpoint on an as-needed basis.

As noted in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not result in a direct or indirect increase to the City's population and personnel at the existing BPS facility would continue to staff the new facility. The proposed land use would be consistent with existing conditions and the Project does not conflict with the intent of the City's General Plan Land Use, Zoning Regulations, or growth projections. Therefore, the Project would not result in an increase in demand for police protection services. The BPD and Riverside County Sheriff's office would continue to provide service to the project site and would not require additional officers.

Accidents often increase in both frequency and severity in areas of traffic congestion. In addition, responding to emergency situations increases response times for emergency services such as fire, ambulances, and police. Therefore, this project, by reducing traffic congestion at the project site, will result in a lower demand of police and other emergency services. The construction of new or expanded police facilities would not be required. Therefore, construction and operation of the Project would have **no impact** on police protection and facilities. No mitigation is required.

a) iii) No Impact

The Project site is within the boundaries of the Palo Verde Unified School District (PVUSD). PVUSD serves approximately 3,805 students and operates 6 schools, including 1 preschool, 3 elementary schools (grades K-8), 1 high school, and 1 continuation school. As noted in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not result in a direct or indirect increase to the City's population and personnel at the existing BPS would continue to staff the new facility. Therefore, the Project would not generate an increase in the student

[70] City of Blythe. n.d.-b. Police Department. Website: https://www.cityofblythe.ca.gov/Directory.aspx?did=73 (accessed December 14, 2022).

population and would not result in a need for new or physically altered school facilities. **No impact** would occur; therefore, no mitigation is required.

a) iv) No Impact

The closest park to the Project site is Quechan Park and Quechan Marina, which are immediately adjacent to the existing Blythe BPS facility. Quechan Park is located approximately 0.1 mile north of the easternmost point of the proposed improvements and includes grassy areas and a boat launch area. During construction of the Project, access to Quechan Park would not be temporarily modified or otherwise affected. I-10 and Hobsonway (adjacent to Quechan Park) are expected to remain operational during relocation of the Blythe BPS facility and realignment of the freeway. Therefore, construction activities would not result in direct or indirect impacts on the park. The Project is relocating an existing use west (farther from Quechan Park) of its current location. Therefore, The Project would not result in direct or indirect impacts to Quechen Park during project operations.

Other nearby parks in the City of Blythe include Sungold Park, Todd Park, and Miller Community Park. As noted in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not result in a direct or indirect increase to the City's population and personnel at the existing BPS facility would continue to staff the new facility. Therefore, the Project would not generate a demand for additional park facilities and would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision or need for of new or physically altered park facilities; therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is warranted.

a) v) No Impact

The Project would not increase demand for other public service including libraries, community centers, and public health care facilities. As previously discussed, the Project does not include land uses, such as residences, that would increase the City's population or generate an increased demand for public facilities. **No Impact** would occur; therefore, no mitigation is required.

3.16 Recreation

		Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a)	Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

a) No Impact

The City operates and maintains more than 70 acre of parkland or recreational facilities including seven parks and one pocket park. Quechan Park, which includes the City-operated Quechan Marina, is adjacent to the project site at 12200 Summer Drive. Quechan Park is approximately 0.1 mile north of the easternmost point of the proposed improvements at the Project site. Construction activities would not result in any direct or indirect impacts on the park. During construction of the Project, access to Quechan Park would not be temporarily modified or otherwise affected.

As noted in Section 3.14, Population and Housing, the Project would not result in a direct or indirect increase to the City's population and personnel at the existing BPS would continue to staff the new facility. Construction of the Project would provide short-term construction jobs but due to the limited timeframe in which construction would take place, workers would not be expected to relocate or otherwise indirectly alter the City's existing population. Therefore, the Project would not result in a significant increase in the use of existing neighborhood, regional parks, or other recreational facilities. **No impact** would occur. No mitigation is required.

b) No Impact

The project involves the replacement of the existing Blythe BPS facility and does not include the construction or expansion of any recreational facilities. The Project site is adjacent to Quechan Park and Marina but would have no impact on access or usage of these existing park areas. The proposed project does not conflict with the intent of the City's General Plan Land Use, Zoning Regulations, or growth projections. As previously discussed, the Project would not result in an increase in the City's population and therefore would not result in an increase in use of existing parks and recreational facilities. Therefore, the Project would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. **No impact** would occur, and no mitigation is required.

3.17 Transportation

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

The following section is based on information provided in the Traffic Impact Analysis[71] prepared for the Project. The Traffic Impact Analysis evaluates the potential impacts the proposed project may have on the local roadway network, traffic volumes, level of service (LOS), and vehicle queuing.

The existing Blythe BPS is immediately west of the Colorado River. The existing station has a total of six lanes. I-10 westbound passes through the BPS facility, and has two lanes in either direction (i.e., heading east and west) in the project area. Hobsonway and East Donlon Street serve as frontage roads that run parallel to I-10, north and south of I-10, respectively. Both streets meet beneath the I-10 bridge over the Colorado River. Approximately 0.5 mile west of the BPS facility is an I-10 off-ramp that provides access to Hobsonway, hereinafter referred to as the Hobsonway Connector. The Hobsonway Connector ramp intersection currently operates with all-way stop control. The Hobsonway Connector and Hobsonway are both two-lane, undivided roadways. The Intake Boulevard interchange is approximately one mile farther west from the Hobsonway Connector ramps and is the first full interchange for westbound traffic after passing through the Blythe BPS facility. The interchange is a diamond configuration and both ramp intersections operate with stop control on the ramps. Intake Boulevard is a four-lane roadway at the interchange.

Under existing conditions, due to the location of the existing BPS facility and high volumes which pass through the BPS facility, traffic often backs up from the BPS facility to and over the Colorado River.

a) Less Than Significant

The Project would demolish the existing Blythe BPS facility and construct a new Blythe BPS facility approximately 0.66 mile west of its existing location. The Project would construct a facility that is in a location that improves traffic operations along westbound I-10 and that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities.

[71] Psomas. 2022b. Blythe Border Protection Station Traffic Operations Analysis Report. November.

As part of the Project, the existing westbound I-10 lanes (east of the Project site) would be realigned to divert vehicles to inspection booths at the relocated BPS facility. These lanes would be widened at the relocated BPS to accommodate five lanes for passenger vehicles and four lanes for commercial trucks. The additional lanes would be within the limits of the relocated BPS, would be for inspections only, and would not provide additional I-10 westbound through-lanes. A 30-foot-wide shoulder would also be constructed north of the four commercial truck lanes to accommodate bypass of oversized vehicles and to permit temporary commercial truck staging and inspection activities. All lanes would merge back into the existing two westbound I-10 lanes near Post Mile 156.4. Additionally, as part of the Project, a portion of Hobsonway would be relocated from its existing alignment north to accommodate the new location of the Blythe BPS facility. Similar to the current condition, the realigned Hobsonway would retain two travel lanes (one eastbound and one westbound), and would be improved with new shoulders, and a 30-foot-wide driveway to access the Blythe BPS. The Project would also remove the existing Hobsonway ramps at I-10 and relocate them west of their existing location.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities. Other than short sidewalk segments adjacent to developed properties along Hobsonway and East Donlon Street, there are no sidewalks along any of the existing roads in the Project area. A short pedestrian path connects Hobsonway to the Colorado River Bridge at the east side of the Project site. No bicycle lanes exist within the Project area; however, the aforementioned path is also able to accommodate bicycle traffic. As part of the Project, the pedestrian path between Hobsonway and I-10 that provides access to the Colorado River would be reconstructed in compliance with ADA requirements. Construction of the Project may result in temporary closure of the existing pedestrian path; however, closure would be limited to the construction period. After the completion of construction, the pedestrian path would be improved and constructed in compliance with ADA requirements and additional minor improvements may be incorporated, such as path lighting and signage. The Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Transit. The City is served by six bus routes operated by the Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency (PVVTA). PVVTA's bus routes connect the City to Palo Verde College, the Chuckawalla and Ironwood state prisons, the nearby community of Ripley, and the Coachella Valley. PVVTA's Blue Route connects a housing development in the western portion of the Project area to the rest of the Blythe on an on-request basis. Buses run on an hourly basis during weekdays. Construction activities may result in temporary traffic and delays; however, impacts would be temporary in nature and limited to the construction period. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in any direct impacts to public transit. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing public transit and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Level of Service. LOS is a qualitative measure that describes operational conditions in terms of travel speed (for arterials), density (for freeways and ramps), and delays (for intersections). LOS ranges from A to F, with A representing the best operating conditions and F representing the worst. Caltrans aims to maintain a LOS at the transition between LOS C and LOS D, and LOS D is generally considered acceptable for facilities in urban areas. According to the Traffic Impact Analysis, I-10, the Hobsonway on-ramp and off-ramp, and the Intake Blvd off-ramp currently operate at LOS C or better during peak hours. The Traffic Impact Analysis concluded that, after implementation of the Project, I-10 and all

studied on- and off-ramps would continue to operate at LOS C during peak hours in the opening year and that I-10 would operate at LOS D in 2040 and the studied on- and off-ramps would continue to operate at LOS C. The I-10 mainline is expected to deteriorate to LOS D in 2040 with or without the Project. Therefore, the Project would maintain an acceptable LOS per Caltrans standards.

During construction of the Project, short-term construction-related impacts may result in delays to the traveling public due to temporary road closures and lane restrictions. A TMP, included as **measure TR-1**, would be prepared during final design and implemented during construction to reduce any impacts related to traffic and transportation resulting from construction of the Project. The TMP would require notification of fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activities and implementation of a construction management program. In the long term, the Project would improve operational efficiency along I-10 as well as supplement the Caltrans improvements to the existing trail located between Hobsonway and I-10 by constructing additional improvements around this reconstructed trail.

The Project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

TR-1 **Transportation Management Plan (TMP):** Prior to the start of construction, the Construction Contractor shall prepare a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to be reviewed and approved by Caltrans. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about the timing, location, and duration of construction activities to minimize temporary delays in provider response times. The Draft TMP shall include construction staging, detours, and road closures for the Blythe BPS Project during construction periods. Additionally, the TMP shall develop and implement a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project Area through signage, detours, and flagmen.

b) Less Than Significant

On September 27, 2013, SB 743 was signed into law, which started a process that changed the way transportation impact analysis is conducted as part of CEQA compliance. These changes include elimination of automobile delay, LOS, and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion as a basis for determining significant impacts under CEQA. According to SB 743, these changes are intended to “more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with Statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.”

In December 2018, the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) completed an update to the *CEQA Guidelines* to implement the requirements of SB 743. The *State CEQA Guidelines* state that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) must be the metric used to determine significant transportation impacts. The *State CEQA Guidelines* require all Lead Agencies in California to use VMT-based thresholds of significance in CEQA documents published after July 1, 2020.

As part of the Project, the existing westbound I-10 lanes (east of the Project site) would be realigned to divert vehicles to inspection booths at the relocated BPS facility. These lanes would be widened at the relocated BPS facility to accommodate five lanes for passenger vehicles and four lanes for commercial trucks. The additional lanes would be within the limits of the relocated BPS facility, would be for inspections only, and would not provide additional I-10 westbound through-lanes. A 30-foot-wide shoulder would also be constructed north of the four commercial truck lanes to accommodate by-pass of oversized vehicles and to permit temporary commercial truck staging and inspection activities. All lanes would merge back into the existing two westbound I-10 lanes near Post Mile 156.4. Additionally, as part of the project, a portion of Hobsonway would be relocated from its existing alignment north to accommodate the new location of the Blythe BPS. Similar to the current condition, the realigned Hobsonway would retain two travel lanes (one eastbound and one westbound) and would be improved with new shoulders and a 30-foot-wide driveway to access the Blythe BPS. The project would also remove the existing Hobsonway ramps at I-10 and relocate them west of their existing location. The Project would not result in additional through-lanes and therefore would not be capacity increasing. Therefore, it can be presumed that once operational, the Project would not result in a change in VMT.

OPR's Technical Advisory states that absent substantial evidence indicating that a project would generate a potentially significant level of VMT, or inconsistency with an SCS or general plan, projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact. There are currently 10 employees staffing the existing BPS. The new Blythe BPS would be staffed by 20 employees. Therefore, employee travel to the site for operation of the Project would not generate more than 110 additional trips per day and it can be assumed that employee travel to the site would not result in significant VMT impacts.

For the reasons discussed above, it can be presumed that once operational, the Project would not result in a change in VMT. This impact would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) No Impact

The Project would demolish the existing Blythe BPS facility and construct a new Blythe BPS facility approximately 0.66 mile west of its existing location. The Project would construct a facility that is in a location that improves traffic operations along westbound I-10 and that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities. As part of the proposed project, the existing westbound I-10 lanes and Hobsonway would be realigned and new shoulders would be constructed. The proposed project would maintain all standard highway features, including design speed, lane width, curve radius, cross slope super elevation rate, maximum grade, and sight distance. The Project area is generally zoned for public/quasi-public, tourist commercial, open space, residential, commercial, and agriculture, and thus, the nature of the roadway improvements necessary to support the Project are compatible with the purpose that the area serves. Therefore, the Project does not propose any improvements that would substantially increase hazards due to geometric design features or incompatible uses, and there would be **no impact**. No mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant

Emergency access would be maintained during construction and any impacts to response time would be short-term in duration and would cease upon the completion of construction. Access to all nearby businesses and residences would be maintained. Additionally, a draft TMP would be prepared during final design and implemented during construction as detailed in **measure TR-1**, which would require notification of fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activities and implementation of a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project Area through signage, detours, and flagmen. Implementation of **measure TR-1** would address any short-term impacts related to traffic and transportation resulting from construction of the Project. Short-term construction-related impacts associated with emergency access would be **less than significant**. In the long-term, the project would provide a benefit emergency services providers by improving traffic operations in the surrounding vicinity. Therefore, there would be **no impacts**. No mitigation is required.

3.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

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

The discussion and analysis provided in this section is based on the HPSR. The consultation study area for tribal cultural resources is the APE, which is the area where ground-disturbing activities would take place, and includes the maximum extent of ground disturbance, including access routes, staging, and work areas.

a) i) No Impact

A Sacred Lands File Search that was conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on May 21, 2020 failed to indicate the presence of cultural resources within the project area. No prehistoric sites were identified during the records search or the field reconnaissance. No Native American tribe has provided information or evidence related to the presence of tribal cultural resources within the APE, the APE's inclusion in a cultural landscape, or the importance of the APE as a sacred place or feature.

Based on the records search, field reconnaissance, and outreach, neither the project area nor the recorded features therein, are listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources or local register of historic resources. The Project would not cause a substantial adverse change in a California Native American tribal cultural resource that is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register or in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k). Therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

a) ii) No Impact

A Sacred Lands File Search that was conducted by the NAHC on May 21, 2020 failed to indicate the presence of cultural resources within the project area. Requests for the initiation of consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and AB 52 were provided via letter and email to the following Native American tribes identified by Caltrans:

- Colorado River Indian Tribe
- Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
- Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

Consultation letters discussing the project and the initiation of Section 106 consultation pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act was provided to tribal contacts on May 21, 2020. These letters requested input regarding any concerns related to the project and to contact Caltrans Cultural Studies regarding any questions/concerns. Caltrans sent consultation follow-up emails on both February 5, 2021, and March 9, 2021. On September 20, 2021, Caltrans extended an AB 52 consultation request to each tribe. To date, no response to the efforts to initiate Section 106 or AB 52 consultation has been received from the contacted tribes. Consultation is an ongoing process throughout the life of the project. As such, Caltrans will continue to consult with any interested Native American tribes as the project moves forward.

As stated in the response to Checklist question 3.5(a), no archaeological resources requiring documentation or evaluation were identified within the APE by the records search or during the archeological field survey.

However, ground-disturbing activities associated with the Project have the potential to disturb previously unknown tribal cultural resources. In the unlikely event that Tribal Cultural Resources are encountered during Project construction, the construction contractor shall be required to implement **measures CR-1 and CR-2**. Adherence with these measures would ensure **no impacts** to tribal cultural resources would occur. No mitigation is required.

3.19 Utilities and Service Systems

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

a) Less Than Significant

The project would impact various utilities, requiring utility relocations to surface utility infrastructure.

Wastewater. The City of Blythe maintains and operates existing sanitary sewer lines within the City, including the Project site. Existing wastewater lines along Hobsonway would be relocated to a new location beneath the realigned Hobsonway to remain outside the future Caltrans right-of-way. Additionally, new utility connections would be installed to provide sewer utilities to the new BPS facilities. The final size of these facilities would be determined prior to issuance of a grading permit. Relocation of the existing sewer line would be completed in coordination with the City and the new sanitary sewer line would be constructed in conformance with City standards. The areas of potential impact from the construction of new sanitary sewer lines are within the analytical footprint of the Project and therefore have already been addressed. Therefore, the construction and relocation of sanitary sewer lines associated with the Project would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Water. The City of Blythe provides water service to the Project site. Existing water lines along Hobsonway would be relocated to a new location beneath the realigned Hobsonway to remain outside the future Caltrans right-of-way. Additionally, new utility connections would be installed to provide water to the new BPS facilities. The final size of these facilities would be determined prior to issuance of a grading permit. Relocation of the existing water line would be completed in coordination with the City and the new water line would be

constructed in conformance with City standards. The project will be further reviewed by the City to ensure compliance with all current and applicable water requirements. Furthermore, the areas of potential impact from the construction of new water lines are within the analytical footprint of the Project and therefore have already been addressed. Therefore, the construction and relocation of water lines associated with the Project would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

The City of Blythe updated its Urban Water Management Plan in 2020 and it was adopted in May 2021. According to the Urban Water Management Plan, the average daily water demand within the City is projected to be 3,460 acre-feet in 2025, and 4,318 acre-feet in 2045.[72] As discussed in Section 4.20 (b), the proposed project would not substantially increase demand for water and would therefore not exceed the capacity of existing water treatment facilities. The Project would not require the construction of new water treatment facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities. Therefore, the impact of the Project on water infrastructure would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Stormwater. Given the flat topography and relatively permeable soils, stormwater runoff in the project area primarily accumulates along roadway embankments or in low-lying areas to infiltrate under existing conditions. Stormwater flows are also captured by an existing box culvert between the existing Hobsonway/I-10 connector road and the unnamed channel, an unnamed man-made earthen channel on the west side of the project site near the location of the proposed I-10/Hobsonway connector road, or by an irrigation canal (F Canal) on the east side of the project site.[73] The Project will include the construction of new stormwater infrastructure including dikes, curbs, two infiltration basins, and two design pollution prevention infiltration areas. At a minimum, basins will be designed to contain and infiltrate the runoff volume from the smallest storm up to the 85th percentile storm event for the new BPS facility and a portion of the new roadways. The proposed stormwater infrastructure would be limited to the Project site and would be constructed in accordance with all City regulations and requirements and be designed consistent with the Caltrans MS4 Permit and Caltrans-approved Design Pollution Prevention and Treatment BMPs. Furthermore, the areas of potential impact from the construction of new stormwater infrastructure are within the analytical footprint of the Project and therefore have already been addressed. Therefore, the construction of the proposed stormwater infrastructure would not cause significant environmental effects and impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Electricity and Gas. Electricity is provided to the project site by Southern California Edison and gas service is provided by Southern California Gas Company. Existing electric poles along Hobsonway would be relocated along the realigned Hobsonway. No gas lines would be relocated as part of the Project. The areas of potential impact from the construction of new electric poles are within the analytical footprint of the Project and therefore have already been addressed. Therefore, the construction and relocation of electric poles associated with the Project would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

[72] City of Blythe. 2021. City of Blythe Urban Water Management Plan. May.

[73] LSA Associates, Inc. 2022e. Water Quality Assessment Report, CDFA Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project. November.

b) Less Than Significant

As noted above, the City provides water service to the project site. The City's sole source of water supply is groundwater produced from the Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin. The City owns and maintains 15 groundwater wells, 5 of which are currently active full time. The other wells are either standby, seasonal, or inactive. The City's current active production capacity is 3,975 gallons per minute. The Palo Verde Valley Groundwater Basin is considered to be a reliable source of supply because it is continually replenished by the adjacent Colorado River. Based on the City's supply and demand projections to 2045, data indicate that the City can meet future demands for all climate conditions (normal water year, single dry year, and multiple dry years) through 2045. [74]

The Project would require water for the two proposed inspection buildings including employee bathrooms and break rooms, for the proposed watercraft washing area, and for landscaping and to support vegetation in the bioretention basins during dry periods. However, the uses proposed with the new Blythe BPS facility would be consistent with the uses of the existing Blythe BPS facility and the Project is not anticipated to require significantly more water than under existing conditions. Therefore, the City would have sufficient water supply to support the Project and implementation of the Project would not require new or expanded entitlements for water supplies, and impacts related to water supply would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

c) Less Than Significant

The City owns and maintains its municipal wastewater collection system containing 3,000 wastewater connections and 75 miles of pipes ranging in size from 6 inches to 30 inches in diameter. This infrastructure carries wastewater flows to the City's wastewater treatment plant, the Blythe Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility, which receives raw wastewater as well as raw stormwater from the City's storm drains. The overall treatment process provides preliminary, primary and secondary treatment before being disinfected and discharged to the percolation ponds or sludge drying beds. The Blythe Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facilities have a dry weather capacity of 5.3 million gallons per day (mgd) and a wet weather capacity of 2.4 mgd. On average, the facility treats 1.3 mgd and the facility is permitted to discharge up to 2.4 mgd of treated wastewater to percolation-evaporated ponds.[75] Therefore, approximately 54 percent of the allowable wet weather capacity is treated on a daily basis and 25 percent of the allowable dry weather capacity is treated on a daily basis.

The Project would generate domestic wastewater, which would be treated by the Blythe Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facilities. However, the uses proposed with the new Blythe BPS facility would be consistent with the uses of the existing Blythe BPS facility and the Project is not anticipated to result in significantly more wastewater than under existing conditions. Additionally, considering approximately 54 percent of the allowable wet weather capacity is treated on a daily basis and 25 percent of the allowable dry weather capacity is treated on a daily basis, the treatment plant would have sufficient capacity to serve the Project. Therefore, wastewater generated from the Project would not cause the Blythe

74 City of Blythe. 2021. City of Blythe Urban Water Management Plan. May.

75 City of Blythe. n.d.-c. Waste Water Treatment Plant. Website: https://www.cityofblythe.ca.gov/78/Waste-Water-Treatment-Plant (accessed December 16, 2022).

Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facilities to violate any wastewater treatment requirements, and this impact would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

d) Less Than Significant

Trash service is provided to the City, including the project site, by CR&R, Inc. Solid waste and recycling collected within the City is hauled to the Blythe Sanitary Landfill at 1000 Midland Road in Blythe. Blythe Sanitary Landfill is owned and operated by the Riverside County Department of Waste Resources. This active and permitted Class III landfill accepts wood waste, tires, mixed municipal waste, metals, liquid waste, inert waste, industrial waste, green materials, dead animals, contaminated soil, construction/demolition waste, and agricultural waste. The Blythe Sanitary Landfill has a capacity of 6,229,670 cubic yards and can accept 400 tons per day. The anticipated closure date of the Blythe Sanitary Landfill is August of 2047.[76]

The uses proposed with the new Blythe BPS facility would be consistent with the uses of the existing Blythe BPS, and the Project is not anticipated to result in significantly more solid waste than under existing conditions. As noted above, the Blythe Sanitary Landfill has adequate capacity to serve the Project. As such, the Project would be served by a landfill with sufficient capacity to accommodate the Project's waste disposal needs. Furthermore, the Project would comply local and State west reduction strategies. Therefore, impacts associated with the disposition of solid waste would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

e) Less Than Significant

The Project would be required to comply with all federal, State, and local solid waste statutes and/or regulations related to solid waste and, as noted above, the Blythe Sanitary Landfill has adequate capacity to serve the Project. Therefore, the Project would result in a **less than significant impact** related to Project compliance with solid waste regulations. No mitigation is required.

[76] CalRecycle. SWIS Facility/Site Activity Details: Blythe Sanitary Landfill (33-AA-0017). Website: https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/SiteActivity/Details/2256?siteID=2378 (accessed December 16, 2022).

3.20 Wildfire

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

CAL FIRE has mapped areas of significant fire hazards in the State through its Fire and Resources Assessment Program. These maps place areas of California into different Fire Hazard Severity Zones based on a hazard scoring system using subjective criteria for fuels, fire history, terrain influences, housing density, and occurrence of severe fire weather where urban brushfire could result in catastrophic losses. As part of this mapping system, land where CAL FIRE is responsible for wildland protection is generally in unincorporated areas and is classified as a State Responsibility Area (SRA). Where local fire protection agencies are responsible for wildfire protection, the land is classified as a Local Responsibility Area.

a) No Impact

The project site is not within an SRA for fire service and is not within a designated very high fire hazard severity zone.[77] The closest very high fire hazard severity zone is approximately 90 miles west of the project site. As discussed in Section 3.9.f, standard construction traffic management actions will be implemented as necessary to ensure the continued safe and efficient flow of traffic during the construction period. Additionally, a draft TMP would be prepared during final design and implemented during construction, as detailed in **measure TR-1**, which would require notification of fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activities and implementation of a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project Area through signage, detours, and flagmen. As access to and through the project area will be maintained throughout project-related construction activities, the proposed project would not impair or interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. Therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

[77] CAL FIRE. n.d. Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Website: https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/ (accessed December 6, 2022).

b) No Impact

As discussed in Section 3.20 (a), the project site is not within an SRA for fire service and is not within a designated very high fire hazard severity zone. The closest very high fire hazard severity zone is approximately 90 miles west of the project site. The project site terrain is generally flat and is primarily surrounded by existing development and irrigated agricultural areas. Therefore, the proposed project would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors, thereby exposing project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Therefore, **no impact** impacts would occur and no mitigation is required.

c) No Impact

As discussed in Section 3.20 (a), the project site is not within an SRA for fire service and is not within a designated very high fire hazard severity zone. The closest very high fire hazard severity zone is approximately 90 miles west of the project site. Utility connections/lines would be constructed in conformance with City standards as detailed in Section 3.19, Utilities and Service Systems. The project does not propose the installation or maintenance of any other 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. Therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

d) No Impact

As discussed in Section 3.20 (a), the project site is not within an SRA for fire service and is not within a designated very high fire hazard severity zone. The closest very high fire hazard severity zone is approximately 90 miles west of the project site. The project site is generally flat. As discussed in Section 3.10, Hydrology and Water Quality, the proposed project would be required to obtain coverage under the CGP and implement a SWPPP that specifies BMPs and erosion control measures to be used during construction to manage runoff flows. Although the Project would not significantly alter drainage patterns compared to existing conditions, as detailed in Section 3.10, the Project would improve existing drainage by constructing two infiltration basins, two DPPIAs, and dikes, curbs, catch basins, and/or drainage swales to collect, treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff during project operations. Furthermore, the project site is not within a flood zone or within an area identified as having potential for landslides. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people or structures to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Therefore, **no impact** would occur and no mitigation is required.

3.21 Senate Bill 743/Induced Demand Analysis

Regulatory Setting

On September 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 743 into law and codified a process that revises the approach to determining transportation impacts and mitigation measures under CEQA. SB 743 directed the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to administer new CEQA guidance for jurisdictions by replacing the focus on automobile vehicle delay and level of service (LOS) or other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion in the transportation impact analysis with vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This change shifts the focus of the transportation impact analysis from measuring impacts to drivers (e.g., the amount of delay and LOS at an intersection) to measuring the impact of driving on the local, regional, and statewide circulation system and on the environment. This shift in focus is expected to better align the transportation impact analysis with the statewide goals related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, encouraging infill development, and promoting public health through active transportation. As a result of SB 743, the California Office of Administrative Law cleared the revised *State CEQA Guidelines* on December 28, 2018, with a statewide implementation date of July 1, 2020. The OPR *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (OPR Technical Advisory) provides a resource for agencies to use at their discretion.

Affected Environment

The Project is on I-10 in the City of Blythe between Post Mile (PM) R156.4 (eastern end) approximately 0.2 mile west of the California/Arizona border line to PM R154.9 (western end). The Colorado River Bridge, spanning the border between California and Arizona, is east of the Project site. Approximately 0.5 mile west of the existing station, an on/off ramp provides access to/from Hobsonway. The Hobsonway ramp currently operates with all-way stop control. The Hobsonway ramps and Hobsonway itself are both two-lane, undivided roadways.

Due to the high traffic volume through the current station, limited number of inspection lanes, and the limited storage queue length to the Colorado River Bridge, motorists experience an extended queue along I-10 that may extend, on occasion, onto the Colorado River Bridge and into Arizona. This extended queue creates a potential safety issue that may lead to the temporary discontinuance of vehicle inspections.

Under the Build Alternative, the existing Blythe BPS will be demolished, and a new facility would be developed approximately 0.66 mile west of the existing station. The two existing westbound I-10 lanes (east of the Project site) would be re-aligned at the Project site to divert vehicles to inspection booths. The two existing westbound lanes will be widened at the relocated BPS to accommodate five lanes for passenger vehicles and four additional lanes for commercial trucks. The additional lanes would be within the limits of the relocated BPS, would be for inspections only, and would not provide additional I-10 westbound through-lanes and would not increase the capacity of the I-10. Additionally, the Build Alternative would relocate the existing Hobsonway connector and corresponding westbound on ramp and off-ramp to the east of its existing location. The Hobsonway replacement would not add any thru lanes. Therefore, relocating and reconstructing the Hobsonway westbound on- and off-ramps would not increase the capacity of the I-10, the on- and off-ramps, or Hobsonway.

Environmental Consequences

The Build Alternative would widen the existing I-10 westbound lanes at the relocated BPS to accommodate more passenger vehicle and truck inspection lanes. The additional lanes would be within the limits of the relocated BPS, would be for inspections only, and would not provide additional I-10 westbound through-lanes and would not increase the capacity of the I-10. The length where the two westbound lanes would be widened to nine lanes would be approximately half mile from the gore point of diverge to the gore point of merge. The project as currently described, as stated above, has a scope that is not likely to lead to a measurable and substantial increase in VMT and therefore an induced travel analysis is not required and subsequently a VMT based CEQA significance determination is not required.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.

3.22 Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the Earth's climate system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization in 1988, is devoted to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and climate change research and policy. Climate change in the past has generally occurred gradually over millennia, or more suddenly in response to cataclysmic natural disruptions. The research of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other scientists over recent decades, however, has unequivocally attributed an accelerated rate of climatological changes over the past 150 years to GHG emissions generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

Human activities generate GHGs consisting primarily of carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6), and various hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). CO_2 is the most abundant GHG; while it is a naturally occurring and necessary component of Earth’s atmosphere, fossil-fuel combustion is the main source of additional, human-generated CO_2 that is the main driver of climate change. In the U.S. and in California, transportation is the largest source of GHG emissions, mostly CO_2.

The impacts of climate change are already being observed in the form of sea level rise, drought, more intense heat, extended and severe fire seasons, and historic flooding from changing storm patterns. Both mitigation and adaptation strategies are necessary to address these impacts. The most important mitigation strategy is to reduce GHG emissions. In the context of climate change (as distinct from CEQA and NEPA), “mitigation” involves actions to reduce GHG emissions or to enhance the “sinks” that store them (such as forests and soils) to lessen adverse impacts. “Adaptation” is planning for and responding to impacts to reduce vulnerability to harm, such as by adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms, heat, and higher sea levels. This analysis will include a discussion of both in the context of this transportation project.

REGULATORY SETTING

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

Federal

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

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

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recognizes the threats that extreme weather, sea level change, and other changes in environmental conditions pose to valuable transportation infrastructure and those who depend on it. FHWA therefore supports a sustainability approach that assesses vulnerability to climate risks and incorporates resilience into planning, asset management, project development and design, and operations and maintenance practices (FHWA 2022). This approach encourages planning

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

The federal government has taken steps to improve fuel economy and energy efficiency to address climate change and its associated effects. The most important of these was the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (42 USC Section 6201) as amended by the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007; and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards. This act established fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) sets and enforces the CAFE standards based on each manufacturer’s average fuel economy for the portion of its vehicles produced for sale in the United States. The Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) calculates average fuel economy levels for manufacturers, and also sets related GHG emissions standards under the Clean Air Act. Raising CAFE standards leads automakers to create a more fuel-efficient fleet, which improves our nation’s energy security, saves consumers money at the pump, and reduces GHG emissions (U.S. DOT 2014).

U.S. EPA published a final rulemaking on December 30, 2021, that raised federal GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model years 2023 through 2026, increasing in stringency each year. The updated GHG emissions standards will avoid more than 3 billion tons of GHG emissions through 2050. In April 2022, NHTSA announced corresponding new fuel economy standards for model years 2024 through 2026, which will reduce fuel use by more than 200 billion gallons through 2050 compared to the old standards and reduce fuel costs for drivers (U.S. EPA 2022a; NHTSA 2022).

State

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

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

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

EO S-01-07 (January 18, 2007): This order sets forth the low carbon fuel standard (LCFS) for California. Under this EO, the carbon intensity of California’s transportation fuels is to be reduced by at least 10 percent by the year 2020. CARB re-adopted the LCFS regulation in

September 2015, and the changes went into effect on January 1, 2016. The program establishes a strong framework to promote the low-carbon fuel adoption necessary to achieve the governor's 2030 and 2050 GHG reduction goals.

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

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

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

EO B-30-15 (April 2015) establishes an interim statewide GHG emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to ensure California meets its target of reducing GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It further orders all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of GHG emissions to implement measures, pursuant to statutory authority, to achieve reductions of GHG emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions reductions targets. It also directs CARB to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MMTCO_2e$). [GHGs differ in how much heat each traps in the atmosphere, called global warming potential, or GWP. CO_2 is the most important GHG, so amounts of other gases are expressed relative to CO_2, using a metric called "carbon dioxide equivalent," or CO_2e. The global warming potential of CO_2 is assigned a value of 1, and the GWP of other gases is assessed as multiples of CO_2.] Finally, it requires the Natural Resources Agency to update the state's climate adaptation strategy, *Safeguarding California*, every 3 years, and to ensure that its provisions are fully implemented.

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

SB 1386, Chapter 545, 2016, declared "it to be the policy of the state that the protection and management of natural and working lands … is an important strategy in meeting the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals, and would require all state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions to consider this policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, expenditures, or grant criteria relating to the protection and management of natural and working lands."

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

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

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

AB 1279, Chapter 337, 2022, The California Climate Crisis Act: This bill mandates carbon neutrality by 2045 and establishes an emissions reduction target of 85% below 1990 level as part of that goal. This bill solidifies a goal included in EO B-55-18. It requires CARB to work with relevant state agencies to ensure that updates to the scoping plan identify and recommend measures to achieve these policy goals and to identify and implement a variety of policies and strategies that enable carbon dioxide removal solutions and carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies in California, as specified.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Project site is on Interstate 10 (I-10) in the City of Blythe between Post Mile (PM) R154.9 (eastern end) approximately 0.2 mile west of the California/Arizona border line and PM R156.4 (western end). The Colorado River Bridge, spanning the border between California and Arizona, is east of the Project site.

The Blythe Border Protection Station (BPS) was initially constructed in 1958 to handle 600,000 vehicles annually. With continued growth, traffic is anticipated to exceed 6 million vehicles annually. Approximately 0.5 mile west of the existing station, an on/off ramp provides access to/from Hobson Way. The Hobson Way ramp currently operates with all-way stop control. The Hobson Way ramps and Hobson Way itself are both two-lane, undivided roadways.

Due to the high traffic volume through the current station, limited number of inspection lanes and the limited storage queue length to the Colorado River Bridge, motorists experience an extended queue along I-10 that may extend, on occasion, onto the Colorado River Bridge and into Arizona.

The existing Blythe BPS is composed of a four-lane inspection structure occupying the westbound lanes of I-10. The two southernmost lanes are used for personal vehicle inspections. The two remaining lanes are used for commercial truck, bus, RV, and pickup inspections. A small building (inspection office building) is underneath the north side of the inspection structure. For vehicles that need further inspection, an area north of the existing inspection structure allows for vehicles to pull to the side of I-10 for a detailed inspection.

The Project site is in Riverside County, adjacent to Arizona, and is not included in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2020–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (2020–2045 RTP/SCS) or the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). The Build Alternative would be consistent with the City's General Plan (2007), the Colorado River Corridor Plan (2007), and the 2020–2045 Connect SoCal RTP/SCS (*Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project Community Impact Assessment* July 2022).

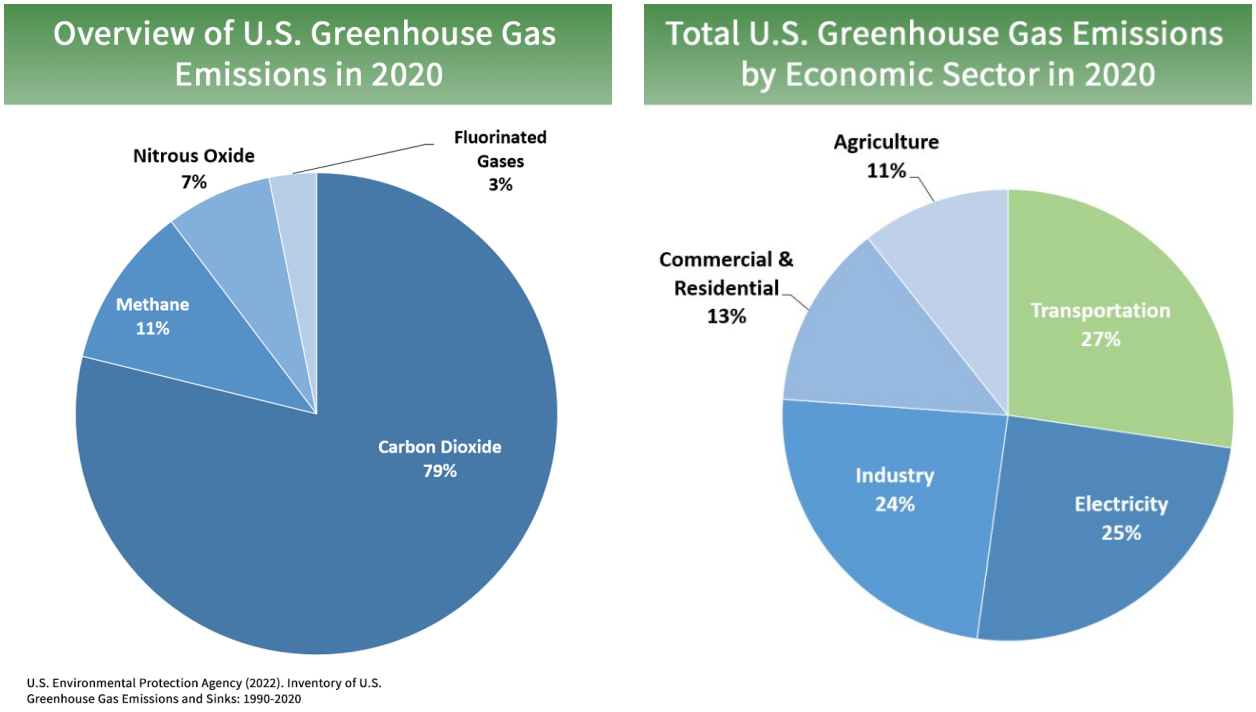
GHG Inventories

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

National GHG Inventory

The annual GHG inventory submitted by the U.S. EPA to the United Nations provides a comprehensive accounting of all human-produced sources of GHGs in the United States. Total GHG emissions from all sectors in 2020 were 5,222 million metric tons (MMT), factoring in deductions for carbon sequestration in the land sector. Of these, 79 percent were CO_2, 11 percent were CH_4, and 7 percent were N_2O; the balance consisted of fluorinated gases. Total GHGs in 2020 decreased by 21% from 2005 levels and 11% from 2019. The change from 2019 resulted primarily from less demand in the transportation sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The transportation sector was responsible for 27 percent of total U.S. GHG emissions in 2020, more than any other sector (Figure 3.21-1), and for 36% of all CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion. Transportation CO_2 emissions for 2020 decreased 13 percent from 2019 to 2020, but were 7 percent higher than transportation CO_2 emissions in 1990 (Figure 3.21-1) (U.S. EPA 2022b).

Figure 3.21-1. U.S. 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Source: U.S. EPA 2022b)



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2022). Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2020

State GHG Inventory

CARB collects GHG emissions data for transportation, electricity, commercial/residential, industrial, agricultural, and waste management sectors each year. It then summarizes and highlights major annual changes and trends to demonstrate the state's progress in meeting its GHG reduction goals. The 2022 edition of the GHG emissions inventory reported emissions trends from 2000 to 2020. Total California GHG emissions in 2020 were 369.2 $MMTCO_2e$, a reduction of 35.3 $MMTCO_2e$ from 2019 and 61.8 $MMTCO_2e$ below the 2020 statewide limit of 431 $MMTCO_2e$. Much of the decrease from 2019 to 2020, however, is likely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transportation sector, during which vehicle miles traveled declined under stay-at-home orders and reductions in goods movement. Nevertheless, transportation remained the largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for 37 percent of statewide emissions (Figure 3.21-2). (Including upstream emissions from oil extraction, petroleum refining, and oil pipelines in California, transportation was responsible for about 47 percent of statewide emissions in 2020; however, those emissions are accounted for in the industrial sector.) California's gross domestic product (GDP) and GHG intensity (GHG emissions per unit of GDP) both declined from 2019 to 2020 (Figure 3.21-3). It is expected that total GHG emissions will increase as the economy recovers over the next few years (CARB 2022a).

Figure 3.21-2. California 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scoping Plan Category (Source: CARB 2022a)

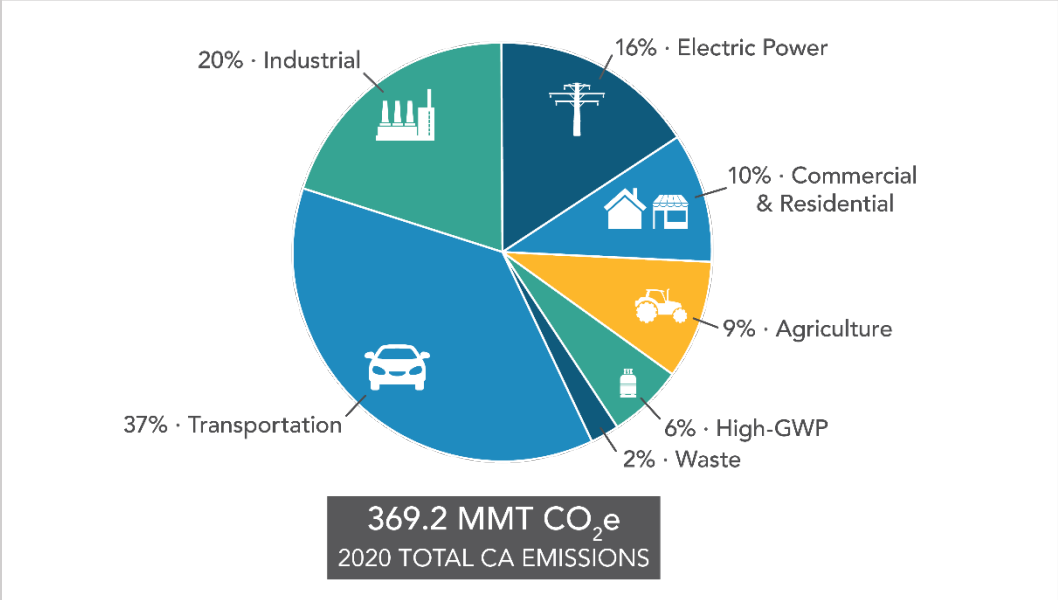
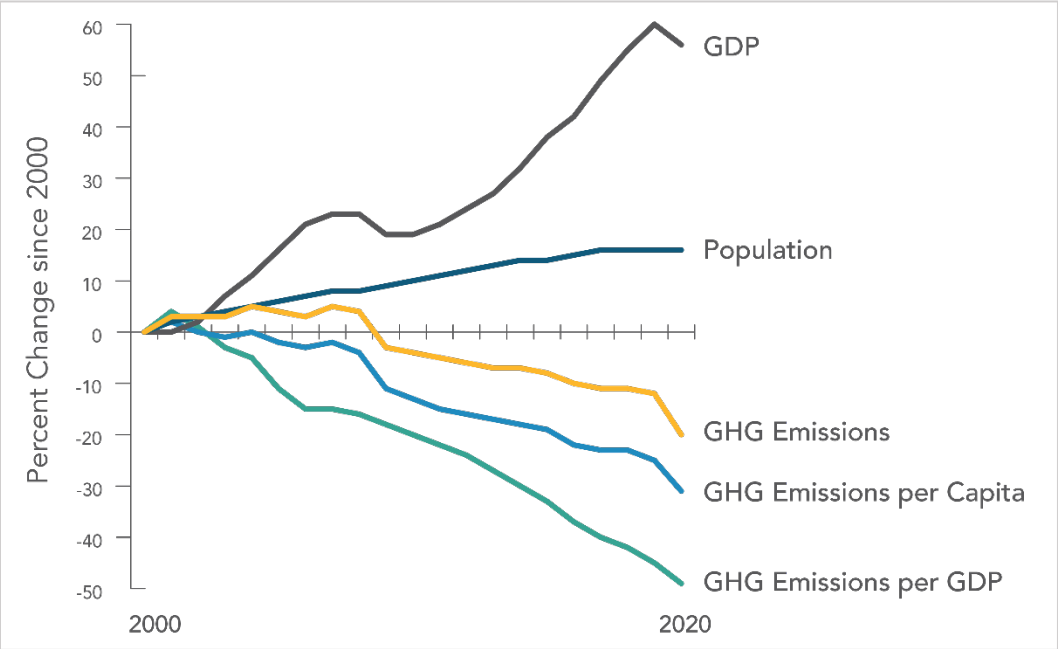


Figure 3.21-3. Change in California GDP, Population, and GHG Emissions since 2000 (Source: CARB 2022a)



AB 32 required CARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to update it every 5 years. CARB adopted the first scoping plan in 2008. The second updated plan, *California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan*, adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in EO B-30-15 and SB 32. The 2022 Scoping Plan Update additionally lays out a path to achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 (CARB 2022b).

Regional Plans

CARB sets regional GHG reduction targets for California's 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to achieve through planning future projects that will cumulatively achieve those goals, and reporting how they will be met in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle GHG emissions per person from 2005 levels. The regional reduction target for SCAG is 19 percent by 2035 (CARB 2022c). Additionally, the City of Blythe includes policies related to GHG reduction, transportation, and energy-efficiency policies in their General Plan, as shown in Table 3.21-1.

Table 3.21.1. Regional and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plans

Title	GHG Reduction Policies or Strategies
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Connect SoCal 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (adopted September 2020)	● Improve mobility, accessibility, reliability, and travel safety for people and goods ● Enhance the preservation, security, and resilience of the regional transportation system ● Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality ● Adapt to a changing climate and support an integrated regional development pattern and transportation network
City of Blythe General Plan (March 2007)	**Community Design Element** ● Policy 3: Minimize the intrusion of Interstate Highway 10 and its interchanges on the visual character and form of the city. ● Policy 4: Make improvements to the major corridors traversing the City to heighten their visibility and accessibility. ● Policy 22: Encourage site and building design to respond to the context and potential linkages to surrounding areas. ● Policy 25: Encourage innovative site design and treatment of surface parking areas. **Circulation Element** ● Policy 14: Promote safe and efficient vehicle circulation. ● Policy 16: Make efficient use of existing transportation facilities, and, through the arrangement of land uses, improved alternate modes, and provision of more direction routes for pedestrians and bicyclists, strive to reduce the total vehicle-miles traveled. ● Policy 18: Coordinate local actions with State and County agencies to ensure consistency. **Open Space and Conservation Elements** ● Policy 12: Encourage mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development and circulation systems that promote use of alternatives to the automobile for transportation, including bicycles and bus transit, along with car-pooling. ● Policy 14: Whenever feasible, coordinate air quality, transportation, and land use planning efforts with other jurisdictions and public agencies responsible for air quality management. ● Policy 26: Conserve scarce or nonrenewable energy resources. ● Policy 27: Promote energy efficiency in new subdivisions and in building design and encourage use of alternative building materials.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

GHG emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation of the State Highway System (SHS) (operational emissions) and those produced during construction. The primary GHGs produced by the transportation sector are CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, and HFCs. CO_2 emissions are a product of burning gasoline or diesel fuel in internal

combustion engines, along with relatively small amounts of CH_4 and N_2O. A small amount of HFC emissions related to refrigeration is also included in the transportation sector.

The CEQA Guidelines generally address greenhouse gas emissions as a cumulative impact due to the global nature of climate change (Pub. Resources Code, § 21083(b)(2)). As the California Supreme Court explained, "because of the global scale of climate change, any one project's contribution is unlikely to be significant by itself." (Cleveland National Forest Foundation *v.* San Diego Assn. of Governments (2017) 3 Cal.5th 497, 512). In assessing cumulative impacts, it must be determined if a project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable" (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130).

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

Construction Emissions

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

Use of long-life pavement, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, can also help offset emissions produced during construction by allowing longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Although Caltrans is the lead agency for the Project, the Project is not a transportation project. The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) is the regional agency responsible for monitoring air quality and GHG in the San Bernardino County portion of the Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB). As such, this analysis follows the guidelines identified by the MDAQMD in its CEQA and Federal Air Conformity Guidelines (MDAQMD, 2020).

MDAQMD does not have an adopted threshold of significance for construction-related GHG emissions. However, lead agencies are required to quantify and disclose GHG emissions that would occur during construction. The MDAQMD then recommends the construction GHG emissions be amortized over the life of the Project, defined as 30 years, added to the operational emissions, and the combination compared to the applicable interim GHG significance threshold for operational emissions. Table 3.21-2 shows CO_2e emission calculations for each respective construction phase of the Project. The construction emissions were estimated for the Build Alternative using the California Emissions Estimator Model version 2020.4.0 (CalEEMod). As indicated in Table 3.21-2, the Project would generate an estimated 2,272 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO_2e) during the Project's approximately 2.5 year construction period. When amortized over the 30-year life of the Project, annual emissions would be 76 metric tons of CO_2e/year. The significance of these emissions is determined based on the combined construction and operational GHG emissions, as discussed below.

Table 3.21.2: Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Construction Phase	Greenhouse Gas Emissions, CO_2e (metric tons)
Demolition	135
Site Preparation	52
Grading	818
Building Construction	1,200
Paving	58
Architectural Coating	9
Total Project Emissions	**2,272**
Total Construction Emissions Amortized over 30 years	**76**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (December 2022).
Note: Numbers may not appear to add correctly due to rounding.
CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

Operational Emissions

The purpose of the Project is to relocate the existing Blythe BPS to provide a facility that is sufficiently sized and equipped to accommodate necessary CDFA inspection operations, required quarantine enforcement, and other border safety/protection activities and to a location that improves traffic operations along westbound I-10.

Although the Project will increase the capacity of the BPS itself, the capacity of I-10 mainline and nearby ramps will not change. In addition, the traffic volumes in the area are expected to be the same in the in the opening (2027) year and future (2047) year for both the Build and No Build alternatives. Therefore, the Project will not result in a substantial increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (Psomas 2022). Therefore, the Project would have no long-term regional vehicle air emission impacts.

The Project will include the development of three inspection canopies; two inspection buildings, a main vehicle inspection building and a commercial truck inspection building; and a parking area. An approximately 100-kilowatt solar array will be developed to provide electricity to the Project. The Project will also include an emergency generator, an incinerator, and a watercraft washing area.

The main vehicle inspection building will be approximately 4,200 gross square feet and will include a lobby and office space, locker facilities, small meeting room, work room, equipment rooms, a kitchen/break room, restrooms, and storage areas. The approximately 2,900 sf commercial vehicle inspection building will provide lobby and office space, a multipurpose room, storage areas, and restrooms. Both inspection buildings will be developed and equipped to accommodate CDFA staff and operations, as well as other visiting cooperative State agency personnel (e.g., CHP, CalRecycle) using and/or assigned to the BPS for temporary operations. The inspection buildings will be designed with modern, non-glare materials.

Long-term operation of the Project would generate GHG emissions from area, mobile, stationary, waste, and water sources as well as indirect emissions from sources associated with energy consumption. Area-source emissions would be associated with activities such as landscaping and maintenance on the Project site and other sources. Mobile-source GHG emissions would include Project-generated vehicle trips associated with employee and material hauling trips to the Project. Stationary-source emissions would be associated with

the incinerator and emergency generator. Waste-source emissions generated by the Project include energy generated by landfilling and other methods of disposal related to transporting and managing Project-generated waste. Water-source emissions associated with the Project are generated by water supply and conveyance, water treatment, water distribution, and wastewater treatment.

Operational GHG emissions were estimated using CalEEMod. Consistent with the criteria pollutant analysis provided in the air quality analysis in Section 3.3, CalEEMod defaults for an automotive service center were used to represent both the existing and proposed BPS. All program defaults were used except for the assumption that there are currently 10 existing employees and there would be 20 employees at the new BPS. All waste and recyclable material at the existing BPS is hauled approximately 12 miles to the Riverside County Blythe Landfill once to twice per week and would continue with operation of the new BPS, which was included in CalEEMod. The new BPS emergency generator was assumed to be CNG powered, approximately 400 horsepower, and operated for one hour per month for routine testing/maintenance, and that the incinerator emissions were assumed to be similar to the CalEEMod parameters for a CNG fired boiler, Table 3.21-3 shows the estimated operational GHG emissions for both the existing BPS and the proposed Project.

Table 3.21.3: Operational GHG Emissions (Metric Tons per Year)

+Emission Type	Operational Emissions			
	CO_2	**CH_4**	**N_2O**	**CO_2e**
Existing Operational Emissions				
Area Source	<1	0	0	<1
Energy Source	93	<1	<1	93
Mobile Source (Employee Trips)	12	<1	<1	12
Mobile Source (Material Hauling Trips)	2	<1	<1	2
Waste Source	2	<1	0	6
Water Source	1	<1	<1	1
Total Existing Emissions				**115**
Proposed Project Operational Emissions				
Area Source	<1	0	0	<1
Energy Source	12	<1	<1	12
Mobile Source (Employee Trips)	20	<1	<1	20
Mobile Source (Material Hauling Trips)	2	<1	<1	2
Stationary Sources	344	<1	0	344
Waste Source	6	<1	0	14
Water Source	3	<1	<1	3
Total Operational Emissions (MT CO_2e/year)				**396**
Amortized Construction Emissions (MT CO_2e/year)				**76**
Total Annual Emissions (MT CO_2e/year)				**472**
Total Net New Annual Emissions (MT CO_2e/year)				**357**
Total Net New Annual Emissions (tons CO_2e/year)				**394**
MDAQMD Interim Threshold (tons CO_2e/year)				**100,000**
Exceedance?				**No**

Source: Compiled by LSA Associates, Inc. (2022).

CH_4 = methane
CO_2 = carbon dioxide
CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent
GHG = greenhouse gas
MT = metric tons
N_2O = nitrous oxide

As shown in Table 3.21-3, operation of the Project would generate 472 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year (MT CO_2e/year), which would result in a net increase of 357 MT CO_2e/year over existing conditions. This net 357 MT CO_2e/year equals 394 tons of CO_2e per year. As discussed above, although Caltrans is the lead agency for the Project, the Project is not a transportation project. As such, this analysis follows the guidelines identified by the MDAQMD in its CEQA and Federal Air Conformity Guidelines (MDAQMD, 2020). The Project's net increase of 394 tons of CO_2e/year is less than the MDAQMD interim threshold of 100,000 tons CO_2e/year.

CEQA Conclusion

As shown above, the proposed Project would result in GHG emissions during construction and operation; however, the Project's operational GHG emissions would not exceed MDAQMD thresholds. The proposed Project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. With implementation of construction GHG-reduction measures, the impact would be less than significant.

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

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Statewide Efforts

In response to AB 32, California is implementing measures to achieve emission reductions of GHGs that cause climate change. Climate change programs in California are effectively reducing GHG emissions from all sectors of the economy. These programs include regulations, market programs, and incentives that will transform transportation, industry, fuels, and other sectors, to take California into a sustainable, low-carbon and cleaner future, while maintaining a robust economy (CARB 2022d).

Major sectors of the California economy, including transportation, will need to reduce emissions to meet 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions targets. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research identified five sustainability pillars in a 2015 report: (1) increasing the share of renewable energy in the State's energy mix to at least 50 percent by 2030; (2) reducing petroleum use by up to 50 percent by 2030; (3) increasing the energy efficiency of existing buildings by 50 percent by 2030; (4) reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants; and (5) stewarding natural resources, including forests, working lands, and wetlands, to ensure that they store carbon, are resilient, and enhance other environmental benefits (OPR 2015). OPR later added strategies related to achieving statewide carbon neutrality by 2045 in accordance with EO B-55-18 and AB 1279 (OPR 2022).

The transportation sector is integral to the people and economy of California. To achieve GHG emission reduction goals, it is vital that the state build on past successes in reducing criteria and toxic air pollutants from transportation and goods movement. GHG emission reductions will come from cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Reducing today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by 50% is a key state goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (California Environmental Protection Agency 2015).

In addition, SB 1386 (Wolk 2016) established as state policy the protection and management of natural and working lands and requires state agencies to consider that

policy in their own decision making. Trees and vegetation on forests, rangelands, farms, and wetlands remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through biological processes and sequester the carbon in above- and below-ground matter.

Subsequently, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-82-20 to combat the crises in climate change and biodiversity. It instructs state agencies to use existing authorities and resources to identify and implement near- and long-term actions to accelerate natural removal of carbon and build climate resilience in our forests, wetlands, urban greenspaces, agricultural soils, and land conservation activities in ways that serve all communities and in particular low-income, disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities. To support this order, the California Natural Resources Agency (2022a) released *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy*, with a focus on nature-based solutions.

Caltrans Activities

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

Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

The California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) builds on executive orders signed by Governor Newsom in 2019 and 2020 targeted at reducing GHG emissions in transportation, which account for more than 40 percent of all polluting emissions, to reach the state's climate goals. Under CAPTI, where feasible and within existing funding program structures, the state will invest discretionary transportation funds in sustainable infrastructure projects that align with its climate, health, and social equity goals (California State Transportation Agency 2021).

California Transportation Plan

The California Transportation Plan (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation plan to meet our future mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions. It serves as an umbrella document for all the other statewide transportation planning documents. The CTP 2050 presents a vision of a safe, resilient, and universally accessible transportation system that supports vibrant communities, advances racial and economic justice, and improves public and environmental health. The plan's climate goal is to achieve statewide GHG emissions reduction targets and increase resilience to climate change. It demonstrates how GHG emissions from the transportation sector can be reduced through advancements in clean fuel technologies; continued shifts toward active travel, transit, and shared mobility; more efficient land use and development practices; and continued shifts to telework (Caltrans 2021a).

Caltrans Strategic Plan

The *Caltrans 2020–2024 Strategic Plan* includes goals of stewardship, climate action, and equity. Climate action strategies include developing and implementing a Caltrans Climate Action Plan; a robust program of climate action education, training, and outreach; partnership and collaboration; a VMT monitoring and reduction program; and engaging with the most vulnerable communities in developing and implementing Caltrans climate action activities (Caltrans 2021b).

Caltrans Policy Directives and Other Initiatives

Caltrans Director's Policy 30 (DP-30) Climate Change (June 22, 2012) established a Department policy to ensure coordinated efforts to incorporate climate change into Departmental decisions and activities. *Caltrans Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigation Report* (Caltrans 2020) provides a comprehensive overview of Caltrans' emissions. The report documents and evaluates current Caltrans procedures and activities that track and reduce GHG emissions and identifies additional opportunities for further reducing GHG emissions from Department-controlled emission sources, in support of Departmental and State goals.

Project-Level GHG Reduction Strategies

The following measures will be implemented during construction activities to reduce GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the Project.

AQ-3 Throughout the construction of the Project, the contractor shall adhere to Sections 14.9-02, 14-9.03, and 14-9.05 of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Standard Specifications for Construction.

AQ-5 During Project construction, all construction vehicles, both on and off site, shall be prohibited from idling in excess of 5 minutes.

ADAPTATION

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

Federal Efforts

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

The *Fourth National Climate Assessment*, published in 2018, presents the foundational science and the "human welfare, societal, and environmental elements of climate change and variability for 10 regions and 18 national topics, with particular attention paid to observed and projected risks, impacts, consideration of risk reduction, and implications under different mitigation pathways."

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

and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions" (U.S. DOT 2011). The U.S. DOT Climate Action Plan of August 2021 followed up with a statement of policy to "accelerate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and make our transportation infrastructure more climate change resilient now and in the future," following this set of guiding principles (U.S. DOT 2021):

- Use best-available science
- Prioritize the most vulnerable
- Preserve ecosystems
- Build community relationships
- Engage globally

U.S. DOT developed its climate action plan pursuant to the federal EO 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* (January 27, 2021). EO 14008 recognized the threats of climate change to national security and ordered federal government agencies to prioritize actions on climate adaptation and resilience in their programs and investments (White House 2021).

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

State Efforts

Climate change adaptation for transportation infrastructure involves long-term planning and risk management to address vulnerabilities in the transportation system. A number of state policies and tools have been developed to guide adaptation efforts.

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment (Fourth Assessment) (2018) is the state's effort to "translate the state of climate science into useful information for action." It provides information that will help decision makers across sectors and at state, regional, and local scales protect and build the resilience of the state's people, infrastructure, natural systems, working lands, and waters. The State's approach recognizes that the consequences of climate change occur at the intersections of people, nature, and infrastructure. The Fourth Assessment reports that if no measures are taken to reduce GHG emissions by 2021 or sooner, the state is projected to experience a 2.7 to 8.8 degrees Fahrenheit increase in average annual maximum daily temperatures, with impacts on agriculture, energy demand, natural systems, and public health; a two-thirds decline in water supply from snowpack and water shortages that will impact agricultural production; a 77% increase in average area burned by wildfire, with consequences for forest health and communities; and large-scale erosion of up to 67% of Southern California beaches and inundation of billions of dollars' worth of residential and commercial buildings due to sea level rise (State of California 2018).

Sea level rise is a particular concern for transportation infrastructure in the coastal zone. Major urban airports will be at risk of flooding from sea level rise combined with storm surge as early as 2040; San Francisco airport is already at risk. Miles of coastal highways

vulnerable to flooding in a 100-year storm event will triple to 370 by 2100, and 3,750 miles will be exposed to temporary flooding. The Fourth Assessment's findings highlight the need for proactive action to address these current and future impacts of climate change.

In 2008, then-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recognized the need when he issued EO S-13-08, focused on sea level rise. Technical reports on the latest sea level rise science were first published in 2010 and updated in 2013 and 2017. The 2017 projections of sea level rise and new understanding of processes and potential impacts in California were incorporated into the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Update* in 2018. This EO also gave rise to the *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* (2009), updated in 2014 as *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* (Safeguarding California Plan), which addressed the full range of climate change impacts and recommended adaptation strategies. The Safeguarding California Plan was updated in 2018 and again in 2021 as the *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, incorporating key elements of the latest sector-specific plans such as the *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy*, *Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan*, *Water Resilience Portfolio,* and the CAPTI (described above). Priorities in the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy include acting in partnership with California Native American Tribes, strengthening protections for climate-vulnerable communities that lack capacity and resources, nature-based climate solutions, use of best available climate science, and partnering and collaboration to best leverage resources (California Natural Resources Agency 2022b).

EO B-30-15, signed in April 2015, requires state agencies to factor climate change into all planning and investment decisions. This EO recognizes that effects of climate change in addition to sea level rise also threaten California's infrastructure. At the direction of EO B-30-15, the Office of Planning and Research published *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies* in 2017, to encourage a uniform and systematic approach.

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

Caltrans Adaptation Efforts

Caltrans Vulnerability Assessments

Caltrans completed climate change vulnerability assessments to identify segments of the State Highway System vulnerable to climate change effects of precipitation, temperature, wildfire, storm surge, and sea level rise.

The climate change data in the assessments were developed in coordination with climate change scientists and experts at federal, state, and regional organizations at the forefront of climate science. The findings of the vulnerability assessments guide analysis of at-risk assets and development of Adaptation Priority Reports as a method to make capital programming decisions to address identified risks.

Project Adaptation Analysis

Sea Level Rise

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

Precipitation and Flooding

The Project area is not within a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 100-year floodplain. According to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 06065C3235G, August 28, 2008, the project footprint is within Zone D, which is defined by FEMA as an "Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard", and an area where "flood hazards are undetermined, but possible". No special considerations are required for development in Zone D areas with regards to a FEMA regulated floodplain. As such, the proposed Project is not located in a floodplain or adjacent to any streams or water bodies that could be affected by climate change so as to present a hazard to the facility or be affected by the facility.

Wildfire

The proposed Project does not traverse any Fire Hazard Severity Zones, as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire n.d.).

Temperature

The Caltrans Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment looked at how high temperatures could impact Caltrans' selection of pavement binder grade. Binder is the "glue" used to bind asphalt together. Thus, the selection of binder is important because the asphalt in locations with anticipated high temperatures would need a high-temperature rating binder.

Based on the Caltrans Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Map, seven day average maximum temperatures at the project site are projected to increase 2.1 degrees by 2025, 5.65 degrees by 2055, and 9.6 degrees by 2085. A Materials Report (Ninyo & Moore 2022) was prepared for the proposed Project which addresses pavement modifications and recommendations based on the project's Desert Climate Zone. As such, the project's pavement and maintenance is expected increase the project's resilience to temperature effects.

3.23 Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

a) Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated

As discussed in Section 4.4, Biological Resources, the Project has the potential to result in impacts to biological resources. The Project has the potential to adversely impact special-status species during construction. With implementation of **measures BIO-1 through BIO-3**, potential impacts to special-status species would be reduced to a less than significant level. Additionally, the Project has the potential to impact six sensitive natural communities within the BSA, including Arrowweed Scrub (arrowweed thickets), Brittlebush Scrub, Bush Seepweed Scrub, Freshwater Marsh (cattail marshes), Goodding's Willow Forest, and Tamarisk Scrub. With implementation of **measures BIO-4 and BIO-9**, potential impacts to sensitive natural communities would be reduced to a less than significant level. In addition, construction of the Project has the potential to impact nesting birds. With implementation of **measure BIO-6**, potential impacts to nesting birds would be reduced to a less than significant level. Furthermore, the Project would temporarily and permanently impact riparian habitat within CDFW jurisdiction. With implementation of **measures BIO-4 and BIO-10 through BIO-13**, temporary and permanent impacts to riparian habitat within CDFW jurisdiction would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Therefore, with implementation of **measures BIO-1 through BIO-13**, the potential for the Project to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

b) No Impact

Section 15065(a)(3) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* states that a project's cumulative impacts are the possible environmental effects that may be cumulatively considerable when considered with other reasonable foreseeable projects. Cumulatively considerable impacts occur when the incremental effects of a particular project or program are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of other past, current, or reasonably foreseeable future projects. Section 15355 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* defines a cumulative impact as an impact that is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the CEQA document together with other projects causing related impacts. The Project is not in the vicinity of any probable current or future projects as identified by the City. As shown in the discussion above, environmental impacts associated with the Project can be reduced to less than significant through standard or project-specific mitigation measures. Furthermore, the impacts relevant to the Project are localized and confined to the immediate project area. Given that the potential project-related impacts are less than significant and geographically limited, and there are no current or future projects scheduled for development within the project area, implementation of the Project would have **no impacts** that are cumulatively considerable when evaluated with the impacts of other current projects, or the effects of probable future projects. No mitigation is required.

c) Less Than Significant

The Project involves the demolition of the existing Blythe BPS facility and the construction of a new BPS facility, including related roadway realignments and improvements. As shown in the discussion above, environmental impacts (including those that may have a direct or indirect adverse effect on humans [i.e., air quality and GHG emissions]) that are associated with the Project can be reduced to less than significant through established measures. Therefore, environmental effects from implementation of the project that would cause a substantial adverse effect on human beings either directly or indirectly would be **less than significant**.

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Chapter 4 – Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and consultation with interested parties. This chapter summarizes efforts of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Department of General Services (DGS), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to fully identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

4.1 Department of General Services Interagency Agreement with Caltrans for PA&ED/PS&E/RW for the Proposed Project

- **May 13, 2021:** DGS and Caltrans finalized the interagency agreement for the Project.

4.2 Public Coordination

- **September 27, 2022:** Project information was posted to the City of Blythe's website.
- **October 10, 2022:** A notice was sent to every individual, organization and/or agency on the distribution list provided in Chapter 6 announcing the availability of project information on the City of Blythe's website, which included a link if people wanted to be added to the information distribution database.

4.3 Project Team Meetings

- **October 24, 20118:** DGS, Caltrans, and DGS' consultants met with the City of Blythe to introduce the project and solicit the City's preliminary concerns, if any.
- **February 17, 2019:** DGS, Caltrans, and DGS' consultants met with the City for a formal project kick-off meeting.
- **May 5, 2021:** DGS met with Metropolitan Water District (MWD) to introduce the project and solicit MWD's preliminary concerns, if any.
- **October 26, 2022:** DGS and DGS's consulting engineer met with Southern California Edison (SCE) to introduce the project and solicit WCE's preliminary concerns, if any.
- **December 8, 2022:** DGS and DGS's consulting engineer met with SCE to discuss SCE's application submittal requirements.
- **May 15, 2023: DGS,** Caltrans, and DGS' consultants met with the City of Blythe and MWD to present the project conceptual plans and solicit preliminary feedback on the project design.

4.4 Native American Consultation

A Sacred Lands File Search that was conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on May 21, 2020, failed to indicate the presence of cultural resources within the project area. Requests for the initiation of consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and AB 52 were provided via letter and email to the following Native American tribes identified by Caltrans:

- Colorado River Indian Tribe
- Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
- Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

Consultation letters discussing the project and the initiation of Section 106 consultation pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act was provided to tribal contacts on May 21, 2020. These letters requested input regarding any concerns related to the project and to contact Caltrans Cultural Studies regarding any questions/concerns. Caltrans sent consultation follow-up emails on both February 5, 2021, and March 9, 2021. On September 20, 2021, Caltrans extended an AB 52 consultation request to each tribe. To date, no response to the efforts to initiate Section 106 or AB 52 consultation has been received from the contacted tribes. Consultation is an ongoing process throughout the life of the project. As such, Caltrans will continue to consult with any interested Native American tribes as the project moves forward.

4.5 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

A list of threatened and endangered species was obtained from the USFW on October 7, 2022.

Chapter 5 – List of Preparers

5.1 California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Gabrielle Duff, Branch Chief, Environmental Studies “B”
Paul Phan, Branch Chief, Environmental Studies “A”
Rachel Darney-Lane, Associate Environmental Planner
Kenya Amezcua, Associate Environmental Planner
Amy Lee, Environmental Scientist
Greg Clark, Stormwater Coordinator
Nick Thompson, Architectural Historian
Sarah Ball, Environmental Planner/Natural Sciences
Nancy Frost, Senior Environmental Planner/Biologist
Edison Jaffery, Environmental Engineering Unit
Neil Azzu, Environmental Engineering
Victoria Stosel, Co-Principal Investigator-Prehistoric Archaeology
Andrew Walters, Environmental Branch Chief
Bahram Karimi, Associate Environmental Planner/Paleontologist
Andrew Pachol, Transportation Engineer
Rodrigo Panganiban, Transportation Engineer
Meenu Chanden, Transportation Engineer

5.2 Department of General Services (DGS)

Anthony Brown, Project Director
Stephanie Coleman, Senior Environmental Planner/Project Manager

5.3 Blackhawk

Kris Alberts, Principal Biologist
Seth Reimers, Senior Biologist

5.4 LSA Associates, Inc.

Pam Reading, Principal in Charge/Project Manager
Ryan Bensley, Principal Environmental Planner
JT Stephens, Principal Noise Specialist
Amy Fischer, Principal Air Quality Specialist
Rory Goodwin, RA, Associate Archaeologist
Sarah Rieboldt, PhD, Associate Paleontologist
Jason Lui, Associate Noise Specialist
Cara Carlucci, Associate Air Quality Specialist
Justin Roos, Associate GIS Specialist
Carl Winter, Senior Environmental Planner
Ashley Honer, Environmental Planner, Water Quality Specialist
Tamar Gharibian, Assistant Environmental Planner
Bianca Martinez, Assistant Air Quality Specialist
Corey Knips, Noise Analyst
Michael Mello, Technical Editor
Chantik Virgil, Senior Word Processor

Matt Phillips, Senior Graphics Specialist

5.5 Ninyo & Moore

Morteza Mirchekari, Project Geologist
Ronald Hallum, Principal Engineer
Patrick Cullip, EIR, ENV Sp, Senior Project Engineer

5.6 Psomas

Paul Gervacio, PE, ENV SP, Senior Project Manager

Chapter 6 – Distribution List

The Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration will be distributed to federal, State, regional, and local agencies and utility providers affected by the proposed project as listed below.

6.1 Federal Agencies

United States Army Corps of Engineers
Los Angeles District
915 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1101
Los Angeles, CA 90017

United States Fish and Wildfire Service
Carlsbad Field Office
2177 Salk Avenue, Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008

6.2 State Agencies

California Department of Conservation
715 P Street, MS 1900
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Air Resources Board
PO Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Inland Desert Region
3602 Inland Empire Boulevard, Suite C-220
Ontario, CA 91764

State Water Resources Control Board
PO Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812

Blythe Area Office
430 S. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

California Department of Water Resources
PO Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236

CalFire Southern Region Headquarter Operations
2524 Mulberry Street
Riverside, CA 92501

California Highway Patrol
601 N. 7th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

6.3 Regional/County/Local Agencies

Peter Aldana
Riverside County Clerk
2724 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507

Southern California Association of Governments
1107 9th Street, Suite 810
Sacramento, CA 95814

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
74-199 El Paseo, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Blythe Public Works Department
440 S. Main Street
Blythe, CA 92225

Blythe Planning Department
235 N Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

Blythe Parks Department
440 S. Main Street
Blythe, CA 92225

Blythe Police Department
240 North Springs Street
Blythe, CA 92225

Riverside County Sheriff's Department
260 North Springs Street
Blythe, CA 92225

Blythe Fire Department
140 West Barnard Street
Blythe, CA 92225

Riverside County Fire Department/CALFIRE
210 W. San Jacinto Avenue
Perris, CA 92570

Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
Attn: Samantha Lopez
14306 Park Avenue
Victorville, CA 92392

Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Metropolitan Water District
Attn: Anna M. Olvera
700 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

6.4 Federal Legislators

Hon. Dianne Feinstein, Member
United States Senate
11111 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 915
Los Angeles, CA 90025-3343

Hon. Alejandro "Alex" Padilla, Member
United States Senate
255 E. Temple Street, Suite 1860
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Hon. Raul Ruiz, 25th Congressional
District United States House of Representatives
343 S. 8th Street, Suite A
El Centro, CA 92243

Hon. Raul Ruiz, 25th Congressional
District United States House of Representatives
81719 Doctor Carreon Boulevard, Suite G
Indio, CA 92201

6.5 State Legislators

Hon. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Member
28th Senate District, State of California
700 Exposition Park Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90037

Hon. Lisa Calderon, Member
56th Assembly District
13181 Crossroads Parkway North, Suite 160
City of Industry, CA 91746-3497

6.6 Local Elected Officials

Hon. V. Manuel Perez
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
4th District Supervisor
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 222
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Mayor, City of Blythe
Attn: Hon. Dale Reynolds
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

Vice Mayor, City of Blythe
Attn: Joseph DeConinck
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

City of Blythe
Councilmember
Attn: Hon. Sam Burton
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

City of Blythe
Councilmember
Attn: Hon. Johnny Rodriguez
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

City of Blythe
Councilmember
Attn: Hon. Joseph Halby
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

City Clerk, City of Blythe
Attn: Mallory Crecelius
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225

6.7 Interested Groups, Organizations, and Individuals

Blythe Chamber of Commerce
101 E Hobsonway
Blythe, CA 92225

Kevin Johnston
2288 Buena Vista Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550

Blythe Marina Estates
251 Summer Drive
Blythe, CA 92225

The Cove RV Resort
500 Rivera Drive
Blythe, CA 92225

El Rancho Estates
2450 E Hobson Way
Blythe, CA 92225

Casa Encinas At River Heights
2200 E Donlon Street
Blythe, CA 92225

6.8 Utilities, Services, and Businesses

Southern California Edison
Jeanette Cachelder
800 W. Cienega Avenue
San Dimas, CA 91773

AT&T Transmission
Oscar Ramirez
491 South 7th Street
Blythe, CA 92225

AT&T (3rd Party Designer)
Attn: Bill Edwards & Joe Forkert
Forkert Engineering & Surveying, Inc.
Consultant and Liaison to AT&T - Legacy T Engineering
22311 Brookhurst Street, Suite 203
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

Southern California Gas Company
Attn: Robert Figuero
1981 W. Lugonia Avenue
SC8031
Redlands, CA 92374

Kinder Morgan
Attn: Destiny Baily
5401 E. Brundage Lane
Bakersfield, CA 93307

Ex El Pipeline Services LLC
Attn: Richard Partin
25067 S 190th Street
Queen Creek, AZ 85142

Palo Verde Irrigation District JR Echrd
180 W 14th Avenue
Blythe, CA 92225

Sprint
Attn: Tibor Laky
2592 DuPont Drive
Irvine, CA 92612

Suddenlink Communications- Blythe
Attn: Tom Teniente
621 W Hobsonway, Suite B 129
Blythe, CA 92225

Blythe Sanitary Landfill
1000 Midland Road
Blythe, CA 92225

California Trucking Association
Attn : Eric Sauer
4148 E. Commerce Way
Sacramento, CA 95834

Arizona Trucking Association
Attn : Tony Bradley
7500 W Madison Street
Tolleson, AZ 85353

American Trucking Association Headquarters
Attn: Jacob Pierce
950 N Glebe Rd, #210
Arlington, VA 22203-4181

Empire Machinery
190 S Intake Boulevard
Blythe, CA 92225

Exxon
1900 E Hobsonway
Blythe, CA 92225

Shell
1902 E Hobsonway
Blythe, CA 92225

Krispy Krunchy Chicken
1902 E Hobsonway
Blythe, CA 92225

Steaks n Cakes
1871 E Hobsonway
Blythe, CA 92225

High Times
1894 E Hobsonway
Blythe, CA 92225

Hampton Inn Suites
2011 E Donlon Street
Blythe, CA 92225

Appendix A. 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
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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.

TONY TAVARES
Director

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Appendix B. Environmental Commitments Record

Environmental Commitments Record (ECR)

DIST-CO-RTE: 08-RIV-10 **PM/PM:** 154.9/156.4 **EA/Project ID.:** EA 1L040 ID No. 0819000139
Project Description: Blythe Border Protection Station Replacement Project
Date (Last modification): June 21, 2023
Environmental Planner: TBD **Phone No.:** TBD
Construction Liaison: TBD **Phone No.:** TBD
Resident Engineer: TBD **Phone No.:** TBD

PERMITS

Permit	Agency	Application Submitted	Permit Received	Permit Expiration	Permit Requirement Completed by:	Permit Requirement Completed on:	Comments
Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Enter date	Enter date	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter comments

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

PS&E/BEFORE RTL

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Water Quality	**WQ-3 Post Construction General Permit Requirements.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are outside of the Caltrans right of way comply with the postconstruction requirements of the Construction General Permit, including designing the Project so that post construction runoff is equal to or less than pre-project runoff for the 85th percentile storm event or the smallest storm event that generates runoff, whichever is larger.	IS/MND p. 3-60	Yes	Caltrans	Portions of the Project site outside Caltrans ROW shall comply with the postconstruction requirements of the CGP.					No
Water Quality	**WQ-4 Caltrans MS4 Permit.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are within Caltrans right of way shall comply with the provisions of the NPDES Permit, Statewide Storm Water Permit for the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans Permit) Order No. 2022-0033-DWQ No. CAS000003 (adopted on June 22, 2022 and effective on January 1, 2023), or any subsequent permit.	IS/MND p. 3-60	Yes	Caltrans	Portions of the Project site within Caltrans ROW shall comply with the provisions of the Caltrans Permit.					No
Water Quality	**WQ-5 Design Pollution Prevention Best Management Practices.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are within the Caltrans right of way include Caltrans-approved Design Pollution Prevention BMPs consistent with the requirements of the Caltrans Permit and Project Planning and Design Guide. Design Pollution Prevention BMPs, including bioinfiltration areas. Project construction shall not be deemed complete until the Design Pollution Prevention BMPs are installed and a long-term BMP maintenance plan is prepared.	IS/MND p. 3-60, 3-61	Yes	Caltrans	Portions of the Project site within Caltrans ROW shall include Caltrans-approved Design Pollution Prevention BMPs consistent with the requirements of the Caltrans Permit and Project Planning and Design Guide.					No
Water Quality	**WQ-6 Treatment Best Management Practices.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are within the Caltrans right of way include Caltrans-approved Treatment BMPs consistent with the requirements of	IS/MND p. 3-61	Yes	Caltrans	Portions of the Project site within Caltrans ROW shall include Caltrans-					No

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
	the Caltrans Permit and Project Planning and Design Guide, including biofiltration basins. Project construction shall not be deemed complete until the Treatment BMPs are installed and a long-term BMP maintenance plan is prepared.				approved Treatment BMPs consistent with the requirements of the Caltrans Permit and Project Planning and Design Guide. Project construction shall not be deemed complete until the Treatment BMPs are installed and a long-term BMP maintenance plan is prepared.					
Water Quality	**WQ-3 Post Construction General Permit Requirements.** During Final design, Caltrans shall ensure that the portions of the Project that are outside of the Caltrans right of way comply with the postconstruction requirements of the Construction General Permit, including designing the Project so that post construction runoff is equal to or less than pre-project runoff for the 85th percentile storm event or the smallest storm event that generates runoff, whichever is larger.									
Transportation	**TR-1 Transportation Management Plan (TMP):** Prior to the start of construction, the Construction Contractor shall prepare a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to be reviewed and approved by Caltrans. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about the timing, location, and duration of construction activities to minimize temporary delays in provider response times. The Draft TMP shall include construction staging, detours, and road closures for the Blythe BPS Project during construction periods. Additionally, the TMP shall develop and implement a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project Area through signage, detours, and flagmen.	IS/MND p. 3-18	Yes	Construction Contractor	The Construction Contractor shall prepare a TMP for review/approval by Caltrans. The Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP and notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activity details to minimize delays.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Geology and Soils	**GEO-1 Seismic Requirements.** Prior to ground-disturbing activities, the final grading, design and/or construction documents for any structure, feature, and or roadway improvement associated with the Blythe BPS Replacement Project shall be reviewed and approved by Caltrans to ensure they fully incorporate the geotechnical and seismic recommendations identified in the project-*specific Geometric Design Report* and *Materials Report*, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and applicable earthwork/design guidelines established by the City of Blythe. Evidence of compliance with applicable earthwork, design and construction shall be provided to Caltrans prior to the initiation of any project-related ground disturbance.	IS/MND p. 3-40	Yes	Project Engineer/ Caltrans	Final plans shall be reviewed and approved by Caltrans to ensure geotechnical and seismic recommendations, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and earthwork/design guidelines by the City of Blythe are incorporated.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No

PRE-CONSTRUCTION

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Biology	**BIO-1 Special-Status Plant Species Survey**. Prior to construction, a preconstruction survey for special-status plant species shall be conducted within suitable habitat within the Project footprint. The survey shall be conducted within the peak bloom periods for each species. If special-status plant species are identified with the project footprint, CDFW shall be consulted to determine the appropriate compensatory mitigation. Compensatory mitigation may include on-site or off-site restoration, seed salvage and reseeding, mitigation bank credit purchases and/or a separate CDFW approved mitigation strategy.	IS/MND p. 3-25	Yes	Qualified Biologist/CDFW	A preconstruction survey for special-status plant species shall be completed by a Qualified Biologist and if special-status plant species are identified, CDFW shall be consulted to determine appropriate mitigation.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes
Biology	**BIO-2 Environmental Training Session**. Prior to construction, a qualified biologist shall conduct an environmental training session for all construction and maintenance personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the special-status species that may occur within the Project footprint, their habitat requirements, and the measures that are being implemented to avoid and/or minimize impacts to these species. The environmental training shall include a discussion of the boundaries within which the workers and equipment must remain.	IS/MND p. 3-26	Yes	Qualified Biologist/Construction Contractor	A Qualified Biologist shall conduct an environmental training session for all construction and maintenance personnel.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Biology	**BIO-4 ESA Fencing**. Prior to the start of construction, the qualified biologist shall identify locations for the placement of ESA fencing along the limits of the work area to keep construction equipment and personnel out of potentially sensitive wildlife habitats (e.g., burrowing owl-occupied areas, active bird nest sites, Arrowweed Scrub, Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Brittlebush Scrub, Bush Seepweed Scrub, Freshwater Marsh, Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest, Tamarisk Scrub). The Construction Contractor, with the assistance of the qualified biologist, shall install the ESA fencing prior to construction activities. The qualified biologist shall verify the correct placement and installation of the ESA fences before work begins in the area.	IS/MND p. 3-26	Yes	Qualified Biologist/Construction Contractor	A Qualified Biologist shall identify locations for ESA fencing to protect sensitive wildlife habitats and the Construction Contractor, with the assistance of the Qualified Biologist, shall install ESA fencing prior to construction activities.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes
Biology	**BIO-5 Special Status Animal Species**. Prior to initial ground disturbance and/or vegetation clearing, the qualified biologist shall conduct a survey of the work area for special-status animal species. If special-status animal species are found, they will be allowed to leave the work area on their own, or if approved by the USFWS and/or CDFW, they will be relocated by the qualified biologist to a safe place outside the work area.	IS/MND p. 3-26	Yes	Qualified Biologist/ USFWS/CDFW	A preconstruction survey for special-status animal species shall be completed by a Qualified Biologist and if special-status animal species are found, they shall be allowed to leave the work area or shall be relocated if approved by USFWS and/or CDFW	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Biology	**BIO-6 Nesting Birds**. The Construction Contractor shall avoid vegetation removal and trimming during the breeding season for birds (i.e., between February 15 and August 31) to the extent practicable. This shall discourage birds from nesting in construction areas and shall greatly reduce the potential for nesting birds to delay the construction schedule. If vegetation removal and trimming cannot be avoided during the breeding season, then the following measures shall be implemented: All suitable nesting habitat within 50 feet of the work limits shall be surveyed by a qualified biologist no more than 14 days prior to ground-disturbing/vegetation removal activities and again within 2 days (48 hours) of such activities. Areas outside the public right-of-way (ROW) shall not be surveyed for active nests unless such areas are visible from the public ROW. If an active nest is found, a qualified biologist shall delineate an appropriate buffer using plastic construction fencing (ESA fencing), pin flags, or other easily identified fencing material. If necessary, the biologist shall consult with the USFWS and/or CDFW to determine an appropriate buffer size. Typically, buffers range from 250 to 500 feet, depending on the species and the location of the nest. However, smaller buffers have been accepted depending on the species, nest location, surrounding habitat, and the nature of the adjacent construction activity. During construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct regular monitoring (at CDFW approved intervals) to evaluate the nest for potential disturbances associated with construction activities. Construction within the buffer shall be prohibited until the qualified biologist determines the nest is no longer active. If an active nest is found after completion of the preconstruction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities in the nest vicinity shall stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected an appropriate buffer around the nest. If establishment of the buffer is not feasible, the USFWS and/or CDFW shall be contacted for further avoidance and minimization guidelines.	IS/MND p. 3-26, 3-27	Yes	Construction Contractor/Qualified Biologist/USFWS/ CDFW	The Construction Contractor shall avoid vegetation removal and trimming during the breeding season for birds. If this cannot be avoided, a Qualified Biologist shall conduct a survey for suitable nesting habitat and appropriate buffers shall be delineated if any nests are found. The Qualified Biologist shall conduct regular monitoring during construction to evaluate nests for potential disturbances. If an active nest is found after construction begins, construction activities shall stop until a Qualified Biologist has evaluated the nest and erected an appropriate buffer.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Biology	**BIO-7 Access Routes**. Prior to construction, the number of access routes, number and size of staging areas, and the total area of construction activity shall be determined and limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the Project goal. Routes and boundaries shall be clearly demarcated both on plans and in the field.	IS/MND p. 3-27	Yes	Construction Contractor	The access routes, staging areas, and construction activity area shall be determined and limited to the minimum area necessary. Routes and boundaries shall be demarcated on plans and in the field.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes
Biology	**BIO-8 Burrowing Owl Surveys.** Between February 15 and July 15, a qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys in known and suitable habitat areas for burrowing owls and within 150 meters (492 feet) from suitable habitat. At least one survey visit shall occur between February 15 and April 15 and at least three survey visits shall occur between April 15 and July 15, with at least one visit after June 15.	IS/MND p. 3-27, 3-28	Yes	Qualified Biologist/CDFW	A Qualified Biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys for burrowing owls. Additionally, two take avoidance	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
	Additionally, two take avoidance burrowing owl surveys shall be completed. One survey shall be completed 14–30 days prior to ground-disturbing and/or vegetation clearing activities and one survey shall be completed within 24 hours in known and suitable habitat areas proposed for Project-related impacts and within 150 meters (492 feet) from suitable habitat proposed for Project-related impacts. If burrowing owls are observed to occupy the Project site and/or adjacent areas within 150 meters (492 feet) during take avoidance surveys or incidentally during construction, the State of California and other pertinent parties shall be notified, and avoidance measures shall be implemented during the peak breeding season (February 15 through July 15). If burrowing owls are present during the non-peak breeding season (July 16 through February 14), and active nesting is not occurring, burrowing owl exclusion measures shall be implemented in accordance with CEQA and with CDFW concurrence on an accepted exclusion approach methodology.				burrowing owl surveys shall be completed. If burrowing owls are observed to occupy the project site or adjacent areas, the State of California and other pertinent parties shall be notified and avoidance measures shall be implemented during the peak breeding season. If burrowing owls are present during the non-peak breeding season, exclusion measures shall be implemented in accordance with CEQA and CDFW concurrence.					
Biology	**BIO-9 Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.** Prior to the start of construction, CDFW shall approve a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to restore, either on- or off-site, all permanently impacted acreages of Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Bush Seepweed Scrub, and Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest. Permanent impacts shall be mitigated at a ratio of 1.5:1 (total acres replaced: total acres impacted) or through the purchase of credits through a CDFW approved mitigation bank.	IS/MND p. 3-29	Yes	CDFW/Qualified Biologist	CDFW shall approve a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for impacted acreages of Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Bush Seepweed Scrub, and Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest. Permanent impacts shall be mitigated at a ratio of 1.5:1 (total acres replaced: total acres impacted) or through purchase of credits through a CDFW approved mitigation bank.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes
Biology	**BIO-10 Temporary Impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities.** Prior to construction, all temporarily impacted acreages of Arrowweed Scrub – Disturbed, Bush Seepweed Scrub and Goodding's Willow Riparian Forest shall be mitigated on and/or off-site through the temporary removal of above-ground vegetation during construction, without disturbing rootstocks, to facilitate regrowth following construction.	IS/MND p. 3-29	Yes	Qualified Biologist/ Construction Contractor	Temporarily impacted acreages of sensitive natural communities shall be mitigated through the temporary removal of above-ground vegetation during construction to facilitate regrowth	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
					following construction					
Geology and Soils	**GEO-1 Seismic Requirements.** Prior to ground-disturbing activities, the final grading, design and/or construction documents for any structure, feature, and or roadway improvement associated with the Blythe BPS Replacement Project shall be reviewed and approved by Caltrans to ensure they fully incorporate the geotechnical and seismic recommendations identified in the project-*specific Geometric Design Report* and *Materials Report*, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and applicable earthwork/design guidelines established by the City of Blythe. Evidence of compliance with applicable earthwork, design and construction shall be provided to Caltrans prior to the initiation of any project-related ground disturbance.	IS/MND p. 3-40	Yes	Project Engineer/ Caltrans	Final plans shall be reviewed and approved by Caltrans to ensure geotechnical and seismic recommendations, Caltrans Standard Specifications, and earthwork/design guidelines by the City of Blythe are incorporated.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	**HAZ-1** Prior to handling traffic striping material, the Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit a lead compliance plan to Caltrans for review and approval. During construction, the removal, handling and disposal of traffic striping material by the Construction Contractor shall adhere to Caltrans Standard Specifications (14-11.12).	IS/MND p. 3-52	Yes	Construction Contractor/Caltrans	The Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit a lead compliance to Caltrans for review and approval. The removal, handling, and disposal of traffic material shall adhere to Caltrans Standard Specifications.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	**HAZ-2** Prior to the start of any demolition activity, the Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit an asbestos compliance plan to Caltrans for review and approval. Prior to any demolition activity on/within the administrative office, the Construction Contractor shall provide evidence that any ACM and/or ACCM identified during the Hazardous Building Materials Survey has been removed pursuant to the requirements identified below. Prior to demolition activities that would disturb identified ACMs, a licensed abatement removal contractor shall remove the ACMs in accordance with the associated abatement specification documents. The licensed abatement contractor must maintain current licenses as required by applicable state or local jurisdictions for the removal, transporting, disposal, or other regulated activities. Applicable laws and regulations shall be followed, including those provisions requiring notification to regulatory agencies, building occupants, demolition contractors, and workers of the presence of asbestos. The assumed asbestos-containing gaskets identified in the HBMS shall be made accessible in order to sample and have analyzed for asbestos content to determine the appropriate handling and disposal requirements. Asbestos abatement monitoring consulting services shall be performed by a third party environmental consultant, to include oversight of abatement contractor activities to be performed in accordance with the abatement specifications, daily air	IS/MND p. 3-52	Yes	Construction Contractor/Caltrans	The Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit an asbestos compliance plan to Caltrans for review and approval. The Construction Contractor shall provide evidence that any ACM and/or ACCM identified have been appropriately removed.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
	monitoring, clearances, verification of complete removal of hazardous materials, and preparation of a closeout report summarizing the abatement activities.									
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	**HAZ-3** Prior to any demolition activity on/within the administrative office identified or on the I beam, supporting beams and columns of the agricultural inspection area, the Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit a lead compliance plan and provide evidence that LBP and/or LCS identified during the Hazardous Building Materials Survey has been removed pursuant to the lead compliance plan as well as the requirements identified below: All disturbances and removal activities shall be performed by a licensed abatement contractor with certified lead personnel. All paint in a non-intact (poor) condition shall be stabilized as soon as possible. All lead related removal activities shall be performed in accordance with the DOSH Lead in Construction Standard, Title 8 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1532.1. Proper LCS waste stream categorization is required for lead components which will be removed and segregated. Prior to disposal, a composite sample of the representative LCS material shall be analyzed for total lead for comparison with the Total Threshold Limit Concentration in accordance with EPA reference method SW-846. If the concentration of total lead is greater than or equal to 1,000 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg), the LCS waste material must be disposed at a landfill which can receive such wastes. If the concentration is less than 50 mg/kg, the sample may be disposed as construction debris, if it is to remain in California. If the total lead result is greater than or equal to 50 mg/kg and less than 1,000 mg/kg, the sample must be further analyzed for soluble lead by the Waste Extraction Test for comparison with the Soluble Threshold Limit Concentration as described in Title 22 CCR 66261.24a. Additionally, if the result is greater than or equal to 100 mg/kg the sample must be further analyzed for leachable lead by the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure for comparison with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) limits. Based on the results of the soluble and leachable analysis the waste material may require disposal as a RCRA hazardous waste or non-RCRA- (California-) hazardous waste. Lead abatement monitoring consulting services shall be performed by a third-party environmental consultant, to include oversight of abatement contractor activities to be performed in accordance with the abatement specifications, daily air monitoring, clearances, verification of complete removal of hazardous materials, and preparation of a closeout report summarizing the abatement activities.	IS/MND p. 3-52, 3-53	Yes	Construction Contractor	The Construction Contractor shall prepare and submit a lead compliance plan and provide evidence that LBP and/or LCS identified during the Hazardous Building Materials Survey has been removed pursuant to the lead compliance plan and all other requirements.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Water Quality	**WQ-1 Construction General Permit.** Prior to commencement of construction activities, the Construction Contractor shall obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities* (Construction General Permit [CGP]) NPDES No. CAS000002, Order No. 2022-0057-DWQ, or any other subsequent permit. This shall include submission of Permit Registration	IS/MND p.3-59, 3-60	Yes	Construction Contractor	The Construction Contractor shall obtain coverage under the CGP and comply with all applicable requirements specified in the CGP	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
	Documents (PRDs), including permit application fees, a Notice of Intent (NOI), and other compliance-related documents required by the permit, to the State Water Resources Control Board via the Stormwater Multiple Application and Report Tracking System (SMARTS). Construction activities shall not commence until a Waste Discharge Identification Number (WDID) is obtained for the project from SMARTS. Project construction shall comply with all applicable requirements specified in the Construction General Permit, including but not limited to, preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and implementation of construction site best management practices (BMPs) to address all construction-related activities, equipment, and materials that have the potential to impact water quality for the appropriate risk level identified for the project. All work shall conform to the Construction Site BMP requirements specified in the latest edition of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Storm Water Quality Handbooks: Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual to control and minimize the impacts of construction and construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed. The SWPPP shall identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of stormwater and shall include Construction BMPs (e.g., Control and Sediment Control BMPs designed to minimize erosion and retain sediment on site and Good Housekeeping BMPs designed to prevent and contain spills and leaks) and prevent discharge of construction debris and waste into receiving waters.									
Transportation	**TR-1 Transportation Management Plan (TMP):** Prior to the start of construction, the Construction Contractor shall prepare a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to be reviewed and approved by Caltrans. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about the timing, location, and duration of construction activities to minimize temporary delays in provider response times. The Draft TMP shall include construction staging, detours, and road closures for the Blythe BPS Project during construction periods. Additionally, the TMP shall develop and implement a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project Area through signage, detours, and flagmen.	IS/MND p. 3-88	Yes	Construction Contractor/Caltrans	The Construction Contractor shall prepare a TMP for review/approval by Caltrans. The Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP and notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activity details to minimize delays.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No

CONSTRUCTION

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Air Quality	**AQ-1 Fugitive Dust.** During all earth disturbance activities, excessive fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering or other dust preventive measures using the following procedures, as specified in the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) Rule 403. The disturbance area shall be minimized to the greatest extent practicable to prevent excessive amounts of dust. All material excavated or graded shall be sufficiently watered to prevent excessive amounts of dust. Watering shall occur at least twice daily with complete coverage, preferably in the late morning and after work is done for the day. All material transported on site or off site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust. Visible dust beyond the property line emanating from the Project will be prevented to the maximum extent feasible. These control techniques shall be included as part of Project plan specifications.	IS/MND p. 3-18	Yes	Construction Contractor	Excessive fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering or other dust preventative measures as specified in the MDAQMD Rule 403.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Air Quality	**AQ-2 Hauling of Excavated Materials.** During construction activities, all trucks that are used to haul excavated or graded material on site shall comply with State Vehicle Code Section 23114, with special attention to Sections 23114(b)(F), (e)(2), and (e)(4), as amended, as the code relates to the prevention of such material spilling onto public streets and roads.	IS/MND p.3-18	Yes	Construction Contractor	All trucks used during construction to haul excavated or graded material shall comply with State Vehicle Code Section 23114	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Air Quality	**AQ-3 Caltrans Air Quality Standard Construction Specifications.** Throughout the construction of the Project, the contractor shall adhere to Sections 14.9-02 and 14-9.03 of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Standard Specifications for Construction.	IS/MND p. 3-18	Yes	Construction Contractor	The Construction Contractor shall adhere to Section 14.9-02 and 14-9.03 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications for Construction	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Air Quality	**AQ-4 Equipment Maintenance.** During Project construction, ozone precursor emissions from construction equipment vehicles shall be controlled by maintaining equipment engines in good condition and in proper tune per manufacturers' specifications.	IS/MND p. 3-18	Yes	Construction Contractor	Ozone precursor emissions from construction equipment vehicles shall be controlled by maintaining equipment engines in good condition and in proper tune per manufacturers' specifications	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Air Quality	**AQ-5 Vehicle Idling.** During Project construction, all construction vehicles, both on and off site, shall be prohibited from idling in excess of 5 minutes.	IS/MND p. 3-18	Yes	Construction Contractor	All construction vehicles shall be prohibited from idling in excess of 5 minutes.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Biology	**BIO-3 Qualified Biologist/Biological Monitor.** During construction, a qualified biologist shall be present at the work site until initial ground-disturbing activities in all portions of the Project site have been completed. After this time, the contractor shall designate a monitor who shall ensure on-site compliance with all avoidance and minimization efforts when the qualified biologist is not on site. The qualified biologist will ensure that	IS/MND p. 3-26	Yes	Qualified Biologist/ Construction Contractor/Biological Monitor/Project Engineer/Caltrans/ USFWS/CDFW	A Qualified Biologist shall be present during construction until initial ground-disturbing activities have been completed, then the	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
	the monitor is familiar with the avoidance and minimization measures and is able to identify all the special-status species that could potentially occur within the Project footprint. The monitor and the qualified biologist shall have the authority to halt any action that might result in impacts that exceed the levels anticipated by the USFWS and/or the CDFW. If work is stopped, the qualified biologist or the on-site monitor shall immediately notify the Project engineer. The Project engineer shall notify Caltrans. If a federally listed species is found in the work area during construction and a Biological Opinion has not been issued for the Project, the qualified biologist must stop work and immediately notify Caltrans. Caltrans shall then consult with the USFWS and shall then advise the contractor on how to proceed. The Caltrans shall contact the CDFW.				Construction Contractor shall designate a Biological Monitor who shall ensure on-site compliance with all avoidance and minimization efforts occur when the Qualified Biologist is not on site. If work is stopped, the Qualified Biologist or Biological Monitor shall immediately notify the Project Engineer, who shall notify Caltrans. If a federally listed species is found and a Biological Opinion has not been issued, the Qualified Biologist must stop work and notify Caltrans who shall consult with USFWS and contact CDFW.					
Biology	**BIO-6 Nesting Birds**. The Construction Contractor shall avoid vegetation removal and trimming during the breeding season for birds (i.e., between February 15 and August 31) to the extent practicable. This shall discourage birds from nesting in construction areas and shall greatly reduce the potential for nesting birds to delay the construction schedule. If vegetation removal and trimming cannot be avoided during the breeding season, then the following measures shall be implemented: All suitable nesting habitat within 50 feet of the work limits shall be surveyed by a qualified biologist no more than 14 days prior to ground-disturbing/vegetation removal activities and again within 2 days (48 hours) of such activities. Areas outside the public right-of-way (ROW) shall not be surveyed for active nests unless such areas are visible from the public ROW. If an active nest is found, a qualified biologist shall delineate an appropriate buffer using plastic construction fencing (ESA fencing), pin flags, or other easily identified fencing material. If necessary, the biologist shall consult with the USFWS and/or CDFW to determine an appropriate buffer size. Typically, buffers range from 250 to 500 feet, depending on the species and the location of the nest. However, smaller buffers have been accepted depending on the species, nest location, surrounding habitat, and the nature of the adjacent construction activity. During construction, the qualified biologist shall conduct regular monitoring (at CDFW approved intervals) to evaluate the nest for potential disturbances associated with construction activities. Construction within the buffer shall be	IS/MND p. 3-26, 3-27	Yes	Construction Contractor/Qualified Biologist/USFWS/ CDFW	The Construction Contractor shall avoid vegetation removal and trimming during the breeding season for birds. If this cannot be avoided, a Qualified Biologist shall conduct a survey for suitable nesting habitat and appropriate buffers shall be delineated if any nests are found. The Qualified Biologist shall conduct regular monitoring during construction to evaluate nests for potential disturbances. If an active nest is found after construction begins, construction activities shall stop					No

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
	prohibited until the qualified biologist determines the nest is no longer active. If an active nest is found after completion of the preconstruction surveys and after construction begins, all construction activities in the nest vicinity shall stop until a qualified biologist has evaluated the nest and erected an appropriate buffer around the nest. If establishment of the buffer is not feasible, the USFWS and/or CDFW shall be contacted for further avoidance and minimization guidelines.				until a Qualified Biologist has evaluated the nest and erected an appropriate buffer.					
Biology	**BIO-11 Construction Best Management Practices.** During construction, all necessary best management practices (BMP) shall be implemented to ensure that no soil or other materials are discharged into Drainage 1. BMPs shall include the use of waddles and silt fences along access roads and around staging, equipment storage and work areas where the potential for impacts exist near Drainage 1. Construction mats, gravel, or other methods to reduce erosion shall be incorporated into the design of the streambed work area.	IS/MND p. 3-29	Yes	Construction Contractor	BMPs shall be implemented to ensure no soil or other materials are discharged into Drainage 1.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Biology	**BIO-12 Construction Period in Drainage 1.** Work within the Drainage 1 streambed shall be restricted to the low-flow season between June 15 and October 15.	IS/MND p. 3-29	Yes	Construction Contractor	Work within Drainage 1 shall be restricted to the low-flow season between June 15 and October 15	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Biology	**BIO-14 Construction Equipment Maintenance, Refueling, and Storage.** During construction, refueling, maintenance, and storage of construction equipment and materials shall take place at least 100 feet from the Drainage 1 riparian canopy boundary.	IS/MND p. 3-29	Yes	Construction Contractor	Refueling, maintenance, and storage of construction equipment and materials shall take place at least 100 feet from the Drainage 1 riparian canopy boundary.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Cultural Resources	**CR-1 Discovery of Unanticipated Archaeological Resources.** If buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find.	IS/MND p. 3-34 and 3-92	Yes	Construction Contractor/Qualified Archaeologist	Work shall stop within 60 feet of any encountered cultural resources until a Qualified Archaeologist can evaluate the find.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Cultural Resources	**CR-2 Discovery of Unanticipated Human Remains.** In the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Andrew Walters, DEBC: (909) 260-5178 and Gary Jones, DNAC: (909) 261-8157. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.	IS/MND p. 3-35 and 3-92, 3-93	Yes	Construction Contractor/County Coroner/NAHC	If human remains are found, the County Coroner shall be notified and all construction activities within 60 feet shall stop. If the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify NAHC who will notify the MLD.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Water Quality	**WQ-2 Groundwater Discharge Permit.** During groundwater dewatering activities, the Construction Contractor shall comply with the provisions of the *General Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters within the California River Basin Region* (Order No. R7-2015-0006, NPDES No. CAG997001). A Notice of Intent (NOI) shall be submitted to the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 45 days before the start of groundwater dewatering activities. The construction contractor shall be required to comply with discharge specifications, receiving water limitations, and monitoring and reporting requirements detailed in this permit for any discharge of groundwater and non-stormwater construction dewatering waste to surface waters that pose an insignificant threat to water quality in the Colorado River Basin region.	IS/MND p. 3-60	Yes	Construction Contractor	The Construction Contractor shall comply with the provisions of the Groundwater Discharge permit	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Noise	**N-1 Allowable Construction Hours.** The construction contractor's operations between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. shall not exceed 86 dBA L_{max} at a distance of 50 feet to comply with Section 14-8.02 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications.	IS/MND p. 3-77	Yes	Construction Contractor	Operations between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. shall not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at a distance of 50 feet to comply with Section 14-8.02 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Noise	**N-2 Muffler Maintenance.** During all project site excavation and grading, the project contractors shall equip all construction equipment, fixed or mobile, with properly operating and maintained mufflers consistent with manufacturers' standards.	IS/MND p. 3-77	Yes	Construction Contractor	Construction equipment shall be equipped with properly operating and maintained mufflers consistent with manufacturers' standards.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Noise	**N-3 Equipment Staging.** The construction contractor shall locate equipment staging in areas that will create the greatest distance between construction-related noise sources and most noise-sensitive receptors nearest the project site during all project construction.	IS/MND p. 3-77, 3-78	Yes	Construction Contractor	Equipment staging areas shall be located in areas that create the greatest distance between construction-related noise sources and most noise-sensitive receptors nearest the project site.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No
Noise	**N-4 Location of Stationary Construction Equipment.** The construction contractor shall place all stationary construction equipment so that the emitted noise is directed away from the sensitive receptors nearest the project site.	IS/MND p. 3-78	Yes	Construction Contractor	Stationary Construction equipment shall be placed so that the emitted noise is directed away from the sensitive receptors nearest the project site.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	No

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Transportation	**TR-1 Transportation Management Plan (TMP):** Prior to the start of construction, the Construction Contractor shall prepare a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to be reviewed and approved by Caltrans. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP. During construction, the Construction Contractor shall notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about the timing, location, and duration of construction activities to minimize temporary delays in provider response times. The Draft TMP shall include construction staging, detours, and road closures for the Blythe BPS Project during construction periods. Additionally, the TMP shall develop and implement a construction management program that maintains access to and from the Project Area through signage, detours, and flagmen.	IS/MND p. 3-88	Yes	Construction Contractor/Caltrans	The Construction Contractor shall prepare a TMP for review/approval by Caltrans. The Construction Contractor shall adhere to all requirements of the TMP and notify applicable fire, emergency, medical, and law enforcement providers about construction activity details to minimize delays.					No

POST-CONSTRUCTION

Category	Task and Brief Description	Source	Included in PS&E package	Responsible Branch/Staff	Action to Comply	Due Date	Task Completed by	Task Completed on	Remarks	Mitigation for significant impacts under CEQA?
Biology	**BIO-13 Restoration of Drainage 1**. Following construction, the temporarily impacted areas of Drainage 1 shall be returned to its original contour and condition to the greatest extent feasible. All constructed ramps into Drainage 1 for temporary construction access, construction mats, and other temporary material used for construction shall be removed.	IS/MND p. 3-29	Yes	Construction Contractor	Temporarily impacted areas of Drainage 1 shall be returned to its original contour and condition to the greatest extent feasible and all constructed ramps shall be removed.	Enter date	Enter Name	Enter date	Enter remarks	Yes

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Appendix C. List of Abbreviations

AB	Assembly Bill
ACCM	asbestos-containing construction materials
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADL	aerially deposited lead
APE	Area of Potential Effects
bgs	below ground surface
BMP	best management practices
BPD	Blythe Police Department
BPS	Blythe Border Protection Station
CAAQS	California ambient air quality standards
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFA	California Department of Food and Agriculture
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERS	California environmental reporting system
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGP	Construction General Permit
CH4	methane

CHP	California Highway Patrol
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNG	compressed natural gas
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
COC	chemicals of concern
CRCP	Colorado River Corridor Plan
CREC	controlled environmental condition
dBA	A-weighted decibel
DGS	California Department of General Services
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPPIA	design pollution prevention infiltration area
DPPIA	drainage pollution prevention infiltration area
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
EV	electric vehicle
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GHG	greenhouse gas
Groundwater Discharge Permit	*General Waste Discharge Requirements for Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters within the California River Basin Region*
HBMS	hazardous building material survey
HPSR	Historic Property Survey Report
HREC	historical recognized environmental condition
I-10	Interstate 10

in/sec	inches per second
IS/MND	Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
kBTU	thousand British thermal units
kW	kilowatt
LBP	lead-based paint
LCS	lead-containing surfaces
L_{max}	maximum instantaneous noise level
LOS	level of service
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
MDAB	Mojave Desert Air Basin
MDAQMD	Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
mg/kg	milligrams per kilogram
mgd	million gallons per day
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
MS4 Permit	*Statewide Stormwater Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements for State of California Department of Transportation*
MT CO2e/year	metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	national ambient air quality standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NO2	nitrogen dioxide
NO_x	nitrogen oxide
O_3	ozone
OCP	organochlorine pesticides
OPP	organophosphorus pesticides
OPR	Office of Planning and Research

PCB	polychlorinated biphenyls
PM	Post Mile
PM_{10}	particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or smaller
PM2.5	particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or smaller
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
Project	replacement and relocation of the Blythe Border Protection Station
pVES	preliminary vapor encroachment screen
PVUSD	Palo Verde Unified School District
PVVTA	Palo Verde Valley Transit Agency
RC	Regulatory Compliance Measures
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
REC	recognized environmental condition
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RV	recreational vehicle
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB	Senate Bill
SC	Standard Condition
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
Scoping Plan	California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan.
SGMA	sustainable groundwater management act
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

UST	underground storage tank
VEC	vapor encroachment condition
VESM	Vapor Encroachment Screening Matrix
VMT	vehicle miles traveled

Appendix D. List of Technical Studies

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