

## S.1 NOTICE OF PREPARATION COMMENT SUMMARY

San Luis Obispo County (the County), as the lead agency for the proposed Bob Jones Pathway (BJP; project), prepared, posted, and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) announcing that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was under way. Public comments were encouraged during the public review period, which occurred between March 29, 2010, and April 27, 2010. In addition to the NOP, a public scoping meeting was held on April 5, 2010, at the PG&E Energy Education Center conference room located at 6588 Ontario Road, San Luis Obispo, where the public was provided additional opportunities to comment on the project and scope of the EIR.

Twenty comments were received during the public review period and three additional comments were received following public review. **Table S.1-1** provides a summary of the primary issues of concern raised during the NOP process.

**TABLE S.1-1**  
**SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED IN RESPONSE TO THE NOP**

Topic	Issues/Concerns
<b>Project Description</b>	
Highway 101 Overcrossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size, design, aesthetics</li> <li>• Too expensive</li> <li>• Should go under Highway 101 near San Luis Obispo Creek or go down San Luis Bay Drive to Ontario Road</li> </ul>
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too expensive</li> <li>• Funding sources</li> </ul>
Easements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easements have not been obtained yet</li> <li>• Concerned that property owners may be unwilling to grant easement</li> </ul>
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of users</li> <li>• Horses should be prohibited</li> <li>• Accessible for mobility disabled</li> </ul>
Design/Alternative Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using Baron Canyon Ranch entry area as a staging area for walkers/cyclists is a concern but unclear why</li> <li>• Ontario Road would be a better location</li> <li>• Accessibility for mobility impaired should be addressed for each alternative</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Resource Concerns</b>	
Liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail will devalue property, promote trespassing, and potentially cause damage to his property</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	
Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency with viewshed ordinance</li> <li>• Highway 101 scenic corridor</li> <li>• Views of historic Avila Valley schoolhouse</li> </ul>
Agricultural Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail should be designed to accommodate farm traffic or create a parallel dirt track for farm equipment to spare the trail from farm equipment damage along trail sections in the access easements</li> <li>• Suggested permit conditions and mitigation:</li> </ul>

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Topic	Issues/Concerns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Measures to control or preclude trail access during pesticide applications</li> <li>○ Measures to address potential spread of noxious weeds</li> <li>○ Avoidance of relocating any agricultural infrastructure impacted by the trail or trailhead construction</li> <li>○ Avoidance or minimization of impacts such as soil compaction or incorporation of base material into adjoining farmland</li> <li>○ Coordination of trail construction timing with agricultural activities</li> <li>○ Addressing trail drainage or concentration of drainage through culverts</li> <li>● Suggested mitigation measures should be developed as part of the EIR</li> </ul>
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Referred to CEQA Air Quality Handbook for permit stipulations/conditions</li> <li>● Suggested consultation with APCD</li> </ul>
Flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At Monte Road/San Luis Bay Drive intersection</li> <li>● During flood emergencies, control of access to the path via informational signs, gate control, and weather monitoring with alerting would avoid death or injury.</li> <li>● Majority of the project is located in a flood hazard area, Zone A of the August 28, 2008, Firm Map No. 06079C1331F. Construction of the pathway, which includes grading and bridges, shall be subject to drainage plan approvals. Provide information potentially relevant for EIR consideration:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ San Luis Obispo County Public Improvements Standards</li> <li>○ County of San Luis Obispo National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, Phase II, Stormwater Management Program (County Code Section 8.68)</li> <li>○ County Code (title 22) sections 22.52 Grading and Drainage, and 22.14.060-flood hazard area</li> <li>○ Flood Hazard Rate Maps (FIRM), August 2008</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Hazards/Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cyclists/runners sharing roadway with automobiles on Monte Road presents a hazard</li> <li>● Fire concerns with respect to cigarette users</li> <li>● Include landmarks for first responders to easily identify location of persons in need on the pathway</li> <li>● Crosswalk at the entrance of the Bunnell and Maino properties is unnecessary, creates a safety hazard. and can be placed on the other side of Clover Ridge Lane</li> <li>● Signage should indicate “All dogs must be on leash”</li> <li>● Signage should indicate pedestrians should “Keep Right” at short intervals</li> <li>● Public Works questions the two proposed mid-block at-grade trail crossings; also states there is no certainty to when Buckley Road will connect to South Higuera</li> <li>● Trail transition from South Higuera to Clover Ridge Lane does not adequately consider safety with respect to Highway 101 northbound off-ramp.</li> <li>● A crosswalk is not appropriate control for the driveway located off Clover Ridge Lane</li> </ul>
Traffic & Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parking on Clover Ridge Lane is unnecessary and unacceptable because there is adequate parking at the Octagon Barn and at the Johnson Ranch property</li> <li>● Alternative alignments not requiring mid-block crossing on a public road should be evaluated; an alternative that places a portion of the path on the easterly side of the roadway (rather than westerly side) may need to compare impacts to the adjacent creek, agricultural land, and public safety of users.</li> <li>● Provide information potentially relevant for EIR consideration:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ San Luis Obispo County Public Improvements Standards</li> <li>○ County Traffic Impact Study Policies (revised 3/26/2007)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Topic	Issues/Concerns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ County Code (title 22) sections 22.52 Grading and Drainage, and 22.14.060-flood hazard area</li> <li>• Need to construct a center left turn lane into the parking lot in accordance with County standards; otherwise TIA required</li> <li>• Limit the number of driveways onto South Higuera Street to one; otherwise TIA required</li> <li>• Two Higuera Street “mid-block” pathway crossing cannot be permitted on Higuera Street; EIR must evaluate potential public safety concerns with respect to high volume and speed roadways</li> <li>• Discuss State Encroachment Permit process for work within state ROW (CalTrans bridge crossings)</li> <li>• Compare impacts of widening Monte Road to accommodate a Class 2 bike path, versus continuing a Class 1 pathway on separate alignment, versus merging a Class 1 bike path with Monte Road (Class 3 bike path)</li> <li>• A crosswalk is not appropriate control for the driveway located off Clover Ridge Lane</li> <li>• Trail transition from South Higuera to Clover Ridge Lane does not adequately consider safety with respect to US 101 northbound off-ramp</li> </ul>

A copy of the complete NOP and copies of comment letters received are included in **Appendix B** of this document (Volume I CD).

**S.2 IMPACTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT**

Implementation of the proposed project may result in disturbance to the physical environment that will adversely affect existing environmental resources. In some cases, that disturbance may result in a **Class III** (less than significant) impact, **Class IV** (beneficial) impact, or no impact to environmental resources, particularly if no resources are present. Section 15128 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines states that an EIR shall contain a statement briefly indicating the reasons that such environmental topics or impacts were determined not to be significant, and therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR.

**S.2.1 RESOURCES NOT IMPACTED**

The proposed project will result in no impacts on the following: mineral resources, population and housing, and utilities and service systems. Reasons for a finding of no effect on these resources are provided below.

MINERAL RESOURCES

The project alignment travels along San Luis Obispo Creek (SLO Creek), which is an area of known deposits of aggregate materials. However, the alignment will not disrupt or interfere with any existing aggregate mining operations, nor will it impede any known or anticipated operations. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on mineral resources.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

There is limited rural residential development in the vicinity of the project area. However, the proposed project would not result in the development of any population-generating land uses,

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and the alignment will not result in the displacement of existing housing or residents. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on population and housing.

### SCHOOLS (PUBLIC SERVICES)

Because the proposed project would construct a recreation facility, the project would not result in an increase in population that would generate school-age children and subsequently increase the demand on school facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on schools.

## S.2.2 LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT OR BENEFICIAL IMPACTS

### VOLUNTARY MITIGATION MEASURES INCORPORATED INTO THE PROJECT

As identified in Section 1.2, Project Description and Objectives, the project applicant, San Luis Obispo County Parks Department, has incorporated into the project description the applicable standard mitigation measures provided in Appendix F of the County of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Element adopted December 2006. These standard mitigation measures are either included as part of the project design, will be incorporated into the project design and construction documents through voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** (see below), or will be achieved and superseded through implementation of project specific mitigation measures. Applicable standard mitigation measures to be incorporated into the project design and construction documents are included in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** as summarized in **Table S.2-1**. In addition, other standard requirements that the project applicant has agreed to implement have been added to **VMM 1.1** (e.g. compliance with SLO APCD permit requirements).

**TABLE S.2-1**  
**VOLUNTARY MITIGATION MEASURE**

<b>Voluntary Mitigation Measure</b>	
<b>VMM 1.1</b>	<p>Prior to issuance of any building permit, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall confirm that the project's final design incorporates or responds to the following voluntary mitigation measures:</p> <p><u>Aesthetics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All facilities shall comply with the following requirements to the extent feasible. Exceptions may be granted if the new structure, grading, or access road will not be visible from a scenic road or highway as designated by the county or the state.</li><li>• Development, including access roads, shall minimize visibility as viewed from any designated scenic road or highway to the greatest extent practical. Alternative locations or standards may be approved where visual effects are reduced to an insignificant level or where visibility is desired.</li><li>• When screening is necessary to protect a sensitive visual resource, the following is appropriate. The site design shall use existing topographic features to the extent feasible. Where use of topography is not feasible, existing vegetation, new landscaping plants, berms and fencing may be used. Where feasible, the use of natural vegetation and/or landscaping shall take precedence over berms or fences. In cases where vegetation is used, the design shall provide that at least 80 percent of the structure(s), as viewed from public rights-of-way, shall be screened by plants at maturity. New landscaping should</li></ul>

**Voluntary Mitigation Measure**

use native species to the extent feasible.

- New structures proposed on prominent ridgelines shall be located so that they are not silhouetted against the sky as viewed from public roads or the ocean.
- Grading and placement of structures shall occur at least 150 feet from bedrock outcroppings visible from public right of way.
- No grading or structures shall occur on slopes greater than 20 percent (except in the case of trails) unless the County finds that there is no feasible alternative or that by allowing such grading or structures, the overall impacts would be better minimized. Grading shall be designed so that landform alterations are minimized to the extent feasible and blend with the natural topography by following existing contours where feasible.
- Building height and mass of proposed buildings as viewed from public rights-of-way shall be minimized to the extent feasible by using low-profile design and other methods. Colors shall not markedly contrast with the surrounding environment but should complement and be similar to colors of surroundings.
- Facilities shall be designed to minimize new light, except for the minimum required for safety. In general, lighting fixtures shall be downcast and hooded. Night lighting shall limit spillover visible at sensitive uses such as residences to the maximum extent practical. Use of glare-producing materials shall be minimized.

Agriculture Resources

- Pathway shall be sited so as not to be adjacent to agricultural operations to the extent feasible. Where necessary to prevent trespass, fences shall be incorporated into the design.

Air Quality

- Maintain equipment and vehicle engines in good condition and in proper tune per manufacturers' specifications and APCD.
- Use electricity from power poles rather than temporary diesel- or gasoline-powered generators.
- Use methanol- or natural gas-powered mobile equipment and pile drivers instead of diesel if available.
- Use propane- or butane-powered on-site mobile equipment if available.
- Store volatile liquids in closed containers.
- No open burning of debris, lumber or other scrap permitted.
- Evaluate, prior to final construction approval, a particular project's risk of releasing significant quantities of diesel particulate emissions, using APCD Guidelines. Projects which may exceed acceptable thresholds may be required to install one or more pieces of filtering equipment and/or use emulsified fuels.
- Implementation of **Dust Control Measures, including the following:**
  - Watered areas with vehicle traffic; minimum of twice daily
  - Streets adjacent to the project site shall be swept as needed.
  - Exposed areas, new driveways and sidewalks shall be seeded, treated with soil binders, or paved as soon as possible.
  - Cover stockpiles of soil, sand and other loose materials.
  - Cover trucks hauling soil, debris, sand or other loose materials.

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### Voluntary Mitigation Measure

- Sweep project area streets daily.
- Appoint dust control monitor to oversee/implement dust control.
- Contractor shall maintain continuous control of dust from construction.
- When wind creates dust, to generate nuisance complaints, Contractor shall suspend grading operations, and/or water.
- During construction, minimized amount of disturbed area.
- Onsite vehicle speeds should be reduced to 15 mph or less.
- Portable equipment used during construction activities must be in compliance with SLO APCD permit requirements, which may require statewide registration or issuance of a permit from the SLO APCD prior to issuance of any permit.

#### Biology Resources

- Do not install impediments (fences, structures, lighting) to wildlife corridors.
- Limit access to sensitive areas; do not extend trail networks or provide single trails in sensitive areas.

#### Geology/Hydrology

- Facility construction shall be programmed so as to reduce the potential for erosion. Considerations shall include timing to avoid the wet season (generally October 1 through April 15), and limiting the extent of exposed area either through staggering project phases or through a rapid revegetation program. Any construction activity which will involve disturbance of one acre or more will require permitting through the RWQCB NPDES program. All necessary permits will be obtained prior to construction.
- The construction program shall minimize temporary impacts to stormwater flow and drainage by incorporating best management practices. Available BMPs are numerous, and include, but are not limited to, staging area control measures such as proper stockpile maintenance, perimeter control measures such as straw wattle and sandbagging, and internal control measures such as temporary sediment basins. Activities subject to the NPDES permitting program will include these measures in their Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).
- Facilities shall be designed to as to minimize the amount and rate of off-site runoff. No matter the technology used, the facility shall provide sufficient stormwater infrastructure to minimize off-site increases in runoff volume or rate. Facilities shall incorporate, where necessary, appropriate and feasible, measures such as:
  - Permeable paving or surfacing materials.
  - Bioswales or linear depressions in lieu of hard pipe/single outfall options.
  - Natural topographic features to direct/disperse flow.
  - Conjunctive use of recreational facilities to direct and disperse flow.
  - Vegetated buffers.
  - Retention basins (dispersed, small/shallow basins are preferred to single, deep and large basins).
  - Other energy-dissipating structures.
- Facilities shall be maintained so as to minimize the potential for long-term erosion and to ensure rapid response to emerging erosion problems. Trails, and unsurfaced parking or staging areas, among other facilities, shall be inspected on an ongoing basis, at least prior to and after the rainy season, to ensure emerging erosion problems are addressed.

Voluntary Mitigation Measure
<p>Ongoing problems may require surfacing, facility closure, redesign, or revegetation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities shall be operated in a manner which minimizes ongoing impacts to drainage patterns and water quality. The County shall ensure that all installed measures and technologies are maintained in proper function. Stormwater infrastructure shall be inspected at least prior to and after the rainy season to include functionality; any needed repairs or alternative measures shall be pursued as soon as possible following discovery.</li> </ul> <p><u>Noise</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where construction activities will take place near sensitive receptors, the County Noise Ordinance for construction activities, which limits hours of operation, shall apply.</li> </ul> <p><u>Traffic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities shall provide adequate parking such that surrounding area streets are not adversely impacted.</li> <li>Construction activities shall deploy signage, cones, and public notice, among other measures subject to the approval of the County Public Works Department, to minimize potential hazards</li> </ul> <p>The Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall ensure that all voluntary mitigation measures are included in the construction documents and implemented in the field.</p>

Based on the project description, technical reports prepared for the project, and implementation of the above voluntary mitigation measure, it was determined that the proposed project would result in a **Class III, less than significant**, or **Class IV, beneficial**, impact to the following:

**AIR QUALITY**

Air quality within San Luis Obispo County is influenced by regional development land use patterns, associated mobile and stationary source emissions, and geological and meteorological conditions. Locally, the project area lies in a small valley in the Irish Hills between the City of San Luis Obispo and the Pacific Ocean. The area is influenced by both inland and coastal climate but is somewhat sheltered by the surrounding hills.

The project area is located within the jurisdiction of the San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District (SLO APCD). Continuous air quality monitoring has occurred since the 1970s. Pollutant concentrations at any one location tend to vary widely over time due to changing meteorological conditions and variations in source emission rates. As of September 2011, the County was classified as being in nonattainment with state standards for ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and respirable particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>).

**Emissions**

Air quality emissions are typically generated by construction activities, as well as by mobile and stationary sources associated with the operations of a project.

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### Operational Emissions

As a pathway for non-motorized travel, stationary and mobile source emissions associated with operating the BJP would be negligible. There would be no permanent stationary source emissions, and mobile source emissions would be associated with trips generated by users traveling to and from the trailhead. As the proposed project would provide an important link between the City of San Luis Obispo and the existing Ontario Road Staging Area, it is reasonable to assume that the pathway will serve as an alternative mode of transportation and will remove a small number of vehicle trips from the roadway network. This new, safe alignment may encourage alternative forms of transportation (cycling) for commuting between San Luis Obispo and the cities to the south, slightly reducing vehicle miles traveled on the regional roadway network and correspondingly reducing mobile source emissions within the air basin. The proposed project is consistent with the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG; 2012) *2010 Regional Transportation Plan and Preliminary Sustainable Communities Strategy* and the *San Luis Obispo County Bikeways Plan 2010 Update* (SLOCO 2010b). There will be 112 parking spaces provided at the Octagon Barn trailhead available for both pathway and Octagon Barn Center use.

At this time, there is insufficient data to accurately estimate how many people will drive on a given day in order to use the pathway for recreation or otherwise use the pathway to commute to work. In general terms and in terms of air quality, however, the negligible increase in mobile source emissions from users driving and parking at the staging areas is expected to be offset by the reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) realized by more people using non-motorized transportation along the corridor. The net changes in emissions and VMT resulting from the project will be insignificant and do not warrant quantification or modeling, and would not result in changes in operational emissions that would exceed thresholds of significance. For these reasons, this is considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, impact.

### Construction Emissions

Construction of the 4.4-mile pathway will be similar to the construction of a narrow country road. Pathway construction would occur within a varying 20- to 140-foot-wide construction zone, primarily on nearly level terrain, which runs parallel to well-traveled county roads. Grading activities will involve cuts and fills of less than 2 feet within the pathway, which would have an average width of 21 feet (12 to 30 feet), with average cuts to level higher-lying areas and fills of low-lying areas of less than 1 foot. Clearing and grubbing of the path alignment will involve the removal and off-haul of 2 to 3 inches of root-contaminated surface soils and associated vegetation within the pathway. Approximately 4 to 6 inches of Class 2 aggregate base would be imported and placed across the 12-foot-wide pathway and compacted to achieve the 4- to 6-inch minimum aggregate base thickness. A final 4 to 5 inches of loose asphalt cement material would be installed over the Class 2 aggregate base and compacted. Any necessary sealing, a center stripe dividing north and southbound lanes, and pavement stenciling would be applied, and fencing, signage, benches, and other fixtures would be installed.

Implementation of voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** includes construction considerations and dust control measures. Construction considerations would include maintaining equipment and vehicle engines in good condition, use of power poles in lieu of generators, use of methanol or natural fuel in lieu of diesel fuel in equipment, storing volatile liquids in closed containers, prohibiting the burning of debris, and evaluating the risk of releasing significant quantities of diesel particulate emissions using the APCD Guidelines.

PMC conservatively estimated construction emissions using the CalEEMod V.2011.1.1 computer program in accordance with the SLO APCD's CEQA Guidelines. According to Section 1.0,

Introduction and Project Description, the project would be constructed in three phases, as funding becomes available, and over six years. For purposes of quantifying air quality emissions, the following phasing was assumed: Phase 1 would include Segments 1 and 2; Phase 2 would include Segments 3 and 4; and Phase 3 would include Segment 5. Each phase would be generally completed over a two-year period and no two phases would overlap. Since any one phase would be completed over a duration that would extend past more than one quarter, the proposed project would be subject to SLO APCD's daily and Tier 2 quarterly thresholds of significance.

Air quality modeling was based on conservative values provided in the project description. Where a range of values was provided in the project description, the maximum value was used instead of an average to represent a conservative estimate. Modeling assumptions and output are included in **Appendix C**. Phases 1 and 2 are approximately the same distance and acreages; therefore, emissions generated from either of these phases would be similar. Estimated daily construction emissions are summarized in **Table S.2-2a**, and estimated annual construction emissions are summarized in **Table S.2-2b**.

**TABLE S.2-2a**  
**ESTIMATED DAILY CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS**

Phase		Daily Emissions (pounds/day)			
		ROG	NOx	Diesel PM	Fugitive PM
<b>Phase 1 (Segments 1 &amp; 2)</b>					
Year 1	Winter	3.85	20.89	3.48	10.06
	Summer	3.82	20.85	3.48	10.06
Year 2	Winter	50.92	22.64	3.82	4.94
	Summer	50.88	22.60	3.82	4.94
<b>Phase 2 (Segments 3 &amp; 4)</b>					
Year 3	Winter	3.85	20.89	3.48	10.06
	Summer	3.82	20.85	3.48	10.06
Year 4	Winter	50.92	22.64	3.82	4.94
	Summer	50.88	22.60	3.82	4.94
<b>Phase 3 (Segment 5)</b>					
Year 5	Winter	2.73	14.80	2.40	5.58
	Summer	2.71	14.78	2.40	5.58
Year 6	Winter	7.75	13.82	2.22	4.73
	Summer	7.75	13.80	2.22	4.73
<b>SLOAPCD</b>		<b>Daily Emission Thresholds (pounds/day)</b>			
<b>Construction Thresholds of Significance</b>		137		7	
<b>Exceeded?</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Notes: Emissions were estimated using CalEEMod version 2011.1.1 computer program software. Assumptions used to estimate emissions and modeling output are included in **Appendix C**.

Source: PMC 2012

**TABLE S.2-2b**  
**ESTIMATED ANNUAL CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS**

Phase	Annual Emissions (tons/year)			
	ROG	NOx	Diesel PM	Fugitive PM
<b>Phase 1 (Segments 1 &amp; 2)</b>				
Year 1	0.24	1.35	0.22	0.66
Year 2	3.63	1.46	0.24	0.26
<b>Phase 2 (Segments 3 &amp; 4)</b>				
Year 3	0.24	1.35	0.22	0.66
Year 4	3.63	1.46	0.24	0.26
<b>Phase 3 (Segment 5)</b>				
Year 5	0.06	0.37	0.06	0.46
Year 6	0.67	0.97	0.16	0.26
<b>SLOAPCD Construction Thresholds for:</b>	<b>Quarterly Emission Thresholds (tons/quarter)</b>			
Tier 1	2.5		0.13	2.5
Tier 2	6.3		0.32	
<b>Exceeded?</b>	<b>No</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

Notes: Emissions were estimated using CalEEMod version 2011.1.1 computer program software. Assumptions used to estimate emissions and modeling output are included in **Appendix C**.

Source: PMC 2012

As shown in **Tables S.2-2a** and **S.2-2b**, the proposed project would not exceed the SLO APCD's daily or quarterly thresholds of significance for construction activities. Therefore, the construction emissions generated by the proposed project are considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, project and cumulative impact. Voluntary mitigation **VMM 1.1** addresses standard construction mitigation.

### Naturally Occurring Asbestos

According to the SLO APCD, the project area is located within a candidate area for naturally occurring asbestos (NOA), which has been identified as a toxic air contaminant by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Pursuant to CARB's (2008) Air Toxics Control Measure for Construction, Grading, Quarrying, and Surface Mining Operations, prior to any grading activities at the site, a geologic analysis is necessary to determine whether serpentine rock is present. Grading projects in serpentine rock larger than 1 acre will also require an Asbestos Dust Mitigation Plan and an Asbestos Health and Safety Program to be submitted to the SLO APCD for review and approval.

Prior to commencing grading activities within the area of potential effect (APE), the County's General Services Agency will be required to conduct a geologic evaluation to determine if NOA is present within the area to be disturbed. If NOA is not present, the County's General Services Agency shall file an exemption request with the SLO APCD. If NOA is determined present within the area to be disturbed, then the County's General Services Agency must comply with all

requirements outlined in the asbestos air toxics control measure, which may include development of an Asbestos Dust Mitigation Plan and an Asbestos Health and Safety Program, which would be subject to review and approval by the SLO APCD. The proposed project would not result in the generation of substantial toxic air contaminants, and this is considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, project and cumulative impact.

### Sensitive Receptors

One of the most important reasons for air quality standards is for the protection of sensitive receptors. There are existing sensitive receptors within the project area, and the proposed project would introduce sensitive receptors adjacent to Highway 101, which generates mobile source emissions.

The only existing sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the construction zone are approximately four rural residential uses that are currently exposed to emissions generated by agricultural operations and/or mobile sources along adjacent roadways. These residences are located adjacent to the temporary construction access road along Segment 2 and adjacent to Monte Road near San Luis Bay Drive within Segment 3. Construction emissions generated by the proposed project would contribute to the existing conditions for a short duration. Due to the linear nature of the project, construction activities would not occur in any one location along the pathway alignment for long periods of time. Since construction emissions would not exceed thresholds of significance and construction activities would occur for only short durations, the proposed project would not result in high pollutant concentrations that would warrant a health risk assessment.

The proposed project would introduce an unconventional sensitive receptor, a recreational pathway for users of all ages, adjacent to existing mobile sources of air pollutants. CARB advises that a new sensitive land use be located 500 feet from a freeway, urban roads with 100,000 vehicles per day, or rural roads with 50,000 vehicles per day; however, this advisory does not take into account site-specific conditions and needs to be balanced with other state and local policies (CARB 2005). Although approximately 3 miles (70 percent) of the proposed pathway would be located within 500 feet of the Highway 101 corridor, the proposed project encourages reduced mobile source emissions, which would reduce exposure to a broader spectrum of sensitive receptors than just the pathway users. In addition, a majority of the pathway would be surrounded by riparian vegetation that would aid in filtering air pollutants and shield users from the mobile sources of air pollutants. In addition, peak use of the recreation pathway would be during the weekends when vehicle trips on the adjacent freeway and mobile source emissions associated with those vehicle trips would be lower; therefore, this is considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, project and cumulative impact.

## GEOLOGY AND SOILS

### Seismic Hazards

The topography of the project area is gently sloping to moderately sloping. According to the Official Maps of Earthquake Fault Zones delineated by the California Geological Survey through December 2010 under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, the project area lies outside an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (CDC/CGS 2010a). According to the SLO County Planning Department's Natural Hazards Map: Earthquake Fault Zone (2009), the nearest known active fault is the Los Osos Fault Zone, which is located northwest of the project area and runs in an east-west direction. According to SLO County zoning information, four of the 16 project parcels are located within a Geologic Study Area. These parcels include the southern portion of

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Segment 1, including the South Higuera Bridge crossing, and the northern portion of Segment 2 (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 076-061-075, 0761-121-018, -027, and -028). Typically, recreational pathways do not pose a significant seismic geologic hazard. However, the proposed project includes the construction of an overcrossing of Highway 101 and supporting earthen ramps. Implementation of voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** would require the preparation of a geologic report by a certified engineering geologist and/or registered civil engineer to ensure that all geological hazards are appropriately addressed through design. The report is required to identify, describe, and illustrate, where applicable, the potential hazard of surface fault rupture, seismic shaking, liquefaction, or landslide, and recommendations, which would be required to be incorporated in the design of the project, where applicable. The proposed project would not increase the risks associated with seismic hazards, and this is considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact. Seismic related hazards are typically site specific and do not combine with other projects to result in effects that are cumulatively considerable.

### Erosion

Mitigation provided in Section 2.3, Biological and Natural Resources, requires the preparation of an erosion control plan and stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) prior to construction. The SWPPP shall include implementation of erosion control measures during construction and post-project construction. Erosion control measures would include installation of silt fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers (e.g., hay bales). Adequate dust control techniques, such as site watering, are also required during construction. These measures ensure that the potential for soil erosion or loss of topsoil would be minimized. Incorporation of voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** into the project minimizes the potential for long- and short-term erosion. The proposed project would not result in substantial erosion, and this is considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, project and cumulative impact.

### Unstable Soils

Based on the Soil Survey of San Luis Obispo County, California, Coastal Part soil survey maps, eleven soil units are present within the general area of potential effect (APE). These soil units include Chamise Shaly Loam (116), Concepcion Loam (120), Diablo and Cibo Clays (131), Gaviota Fine Sandy Loam (142), Lodo-rock outcrop complex (156), Lopez Very Shaly Clay Loam (156), Marimel Sandy Clay Loam (169), Nacimiento-Calodo complex (181), Pismo-Tierra complex (191), Riverwash (194), Salinas Silty Clay Loam (197), Salinas Silty Clay Loam (198), and Still Gravelly Sandy Clay Loam (210).

The shrink-swell potential is low if the soil has a linear extensibility of less than 3 percent, moderate if 3 to 6 percent, high if 6 to 9 percent, and very high if more than 9 percent. If the linear extensibility is more than 3, shrinking and swelling can cause damage to buildings, roads, and other structures and to plant roots. Within the APE, the Concepcion Loam (120), Gaviota Fine Sandy Loam (142), Lopez Very Shaly Clay Loam (156), Pismo-Tierra complex (191), and Riverwash (194) soils (representing approximately 12.2 percent of the APE, or 18.22 acres) have low shrink-swell potential. Chamise Shaly Loam (116), Lodo-rock outcrop complex (156), Marimel Sandy Clay Loam (169), Nacimiento-Calodo complex (181), Salinas Silty Clay Loam (197), Salinas Silty Clay Loam (198), and Still Gravelly Sandy Clay Loam (210) soils represent approximately 60.3 percent of the APE (or 89.88 acres) have moderate shrink-swell potential. Diablo and Cibo Clays (131) soils represent approximately 3.2 percent of the APE (or 4.71 acres) have high shrink-swell potential.

Because the proposed project is a pathway, the potential for exposing life and property to substantial risk would be minimal. The highest risk areas would be near the bridges and

overcrossing structure, construction of which would require geologic reports that would ensure that all geological hazards, including unstable soils, are appropriately addressed and recommendations are incorporated in the design of the project where applicable. Therefore, the soils associated with the proposed project would be considered to have a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact.

Geology and soil impacts are typically site specific and do not combine with other reasonably foreseeable similar projects to contribute towards cumulative impacts; therefore, the proposed project's affect on geology and soils would be not be considered cumulatively considerable and there would be *no cumulative impact*.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

GHG emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to the significant adverse environmental impacts of global climate change. No single project could generate enough GHG emissions to result in a noticeable change in the average global temperature. The combination of GHG emissions from past, present, and future projects contributes substantially to the phenomenon of global climate change and its associated environmental impacts, and as such, greenhouse gas emissions are addressed only as a cumulative impact.

Development of the proposed project would generate short-term increases of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that would contribute to cumulative GHG emissions that are associated with global climate change. Temporary increases in GHG emissions may be generated by construction activities such as grading, clearing, construction, and tree removal and disposal. Operational emissions generated by the proposed project would be considered negligible. Most of the GHG emissions would be generated by mobile sources or vehicle trips, which would be reduced since the nature of the proposed project would provide an alternative form of transportation that may result in removing vehicles from the roadway network. In addition, changes to natural resources on the project site that currently store and sequester carbon would result in changes to the carbon cycle and may result in the release of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

Temporary emissions would be associated with the use of gasoline- or diesel-powered equipment to remove the trees and the release of carbon through disposal of removed trees and disturbance of soils during site clearing, grading, and construction. **Table S.2-3a** summarizes the estimated short-term GHG emissions associated with construction equipment to be used during the development of the proposed project.

**TABLE S.2-3a**  
**SHORT-TERM CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Construction Year	CO <sub>2</sub> Equivalent (MT/Year)
<b>Phase 1 (Segments 1 &amp; 2)</b>	
Year 1	132.52
Year 2	141.02
<b>Phase 2 (Segments 3 &amp; 4)</b>	
Year 3	132.52
Year 4	141.02
<b>Phase 3 (Segment 5)</b>	

## SUMMARY

Construction Year	CO <sub>2</sub> Equivalent (MT/Year)
Year 5	63.88
Year 6	110.83

Notes: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were calculated by PMC using the CalEEMod computer program based on the proposed project phasing, construction equipment information provided by the applicant. See **Appendix C** modeling output and assumptions.

Source: PMC 2012

As shown in **Table S-3a**, the project would generate a maximum of approximately 141.02 metric tons per year of CO<sub>2</sub>e from construction equipment emissions, with an average of 120.30 metric tons per year. According to the SLO APCD CEQA Handbook, a project is considered to have a significant impact if the operation of that project generated 1,150 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e) per year. Since the proposed project would result in negligible operational emissions, when added to the maximum 141.02 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year generated by construction emissions, the proposed project would still not exceed the SLO APCD's threshold; therefore, this impact would not be considered cumulatively considerable. This is considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### Carbon Sequestration

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the removal of vegetation. Removal and replanting of vegetation can affect the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered within the project area and result in the release of stored CO<sub>2</sub>. In addition, if removed vegetation were to be burned, it would generate additional air pollutants; however, implementation of voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** would prohibit the burning of any debris (including vegetation to be removed) consistent with SLO APCD rules and regulations.

**Table S.2-3b** summarizes the estimated loss of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered quantified using the CalEEMod computer software program. Acreages of foliage based on habitat type were entered into the software program to estimate the loss of stored CO<sub>2</sub>. Based on the existing habitat and the habitat that will be in place upon completion of the project, the proposed project will result in the loss of 51.45 MT of stored CO<sub>2</sub>e. There are no established thresholds of significance for carbon sequestration. Even when adding the maximum construction emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>e and compared to the thresholds of significance for operational emissions, the amount of generated CO<sub>2</sub>e and/or loss of sequestered CO<sub>2</sub>e as a result of the proposed project would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

**TABLE S.2-3b**  
SUMMARY OF LOSS OF SEQUESTERED CO<sub>2</sub>e

Habitat Type	Habitat Acres		Total CO <sub>2</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub> e
	Initial	Final	Metric Tons	
Cropland	66	64.4	-9.92	-9.92
Grassland	13	10	-12.93	-12.93
Scrub	7	5	-28.60	-28.60
Trees	2	2	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>-51.45</b>	<b>-51.45</b>

Notes: Habitat acres from Natural Environment Study prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants in February 2012.

Source: PMC 2012; SWCA 2012b

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## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS/HAZARDS

Because the proposed project is a pathway primarily used by cyclists and pedestrians, it would have no potential to create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment through the routine transport, use, disposal, release, or emission of hazardous materials. Construction workers may be exposed to existing hazardous materials on the project site or used during construction, and pathway users may be exposed to off-site hazardous materials being transported along the adjacent Highway 101 corridor or sprayed on the adjacent agricultural fields. These less than significant effects are addressed below.

### On-Site Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the proposed project may result in the use of varying amounts of hazardous materials. Construction activities would use hazardous materials such as gasoline and diesel, oils and lubricants, paints and paint thinners, cleaners, etc. The types and amounts of hazardous materials used during construction activities would vary according to the type of activity. Development of the proposed project would be required to comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the use, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials during construction activities. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant hazard to the environment (or construction personnel) through the release of hazardous materials during construction.

In addition, portions of the pathway alignment are located on and/or adjacent to land that is currently in agricultural use. These areas may contain residual pesticides and/or herbicides. Clearing and grubbing of the path alignment will involve the removal and off-haul of 2 to 3 inches of roof-contaminated surface soils and associated vegetation within the 12- to 30-foot-wide path cross section, which would be accomplished with a skip loader and a backhoe with a front bucket, thus minimizing any human contact with the cleared vegetation. The exposure to any residual on-site pesticides and/or herbicides would be minimal.

The proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or to the environment, and the risk of exposure to on-site hazardous materials would be considered a **Class III**, *less than significant*, impact.

### Off-Site Hazardous Materials

The primary off-site sources hazardous materials would be from the transportation of hazardous materials along Highway 101 and agricultural operations on adjacent fields/orchards. Safety concerns and potential conflicts with agricultural operations have been addressed in Section 2.2, Agricultural Resources. Highway 101 is a major north-south route in the region and is an alternative route to Interstate 5 for the transportation of hazardous materials. Infrequent hazards that result from accidents involving transport of hazardous chemicals, caustics, explosives, or radioactive materials may occur on Highway 101. However, the transportation of hazardous materials along the highway is subject to various federal, state, and local regulations, which would ensure the safe transport of hazardous materials. As the pathway does not result in unique risks or hazards related to the highway, the potential to expose people to off-site hazardous materials incidents would be considered a **Class III**, *less than significant*, impact.

### Airport Hazards

According to SLO County zoning data, seven of the parcels within Segments 1, 2, and the northernmost 3,000 feet of Segment 3 are located within an AR (Airport Review) zoning district.

## SUMMARY

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Non-public facilities development on these properties would be subject to Federal Aviation Administration height restrictions must be consistent with the applicable County Airport Land Use Plan (Oceano and/or San Luis Obispo). The proposed project is a public facility that would not result in people working or residing within an airport safety hazard area nor conflict with the Federal Aviation Administration height restrictions; therefore, would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, impact.

### Wildland Fire and Emergency Response

According to SLO County zoning data, most of the APE is located within a moderate to high fire hazard area. Emergency response times to the project area vary from 5 to 15 minutes. Because the proposed project is a pathway, it would not interfere with emergency response or evacuation. The structures associated with the proposed project would not have full-time occupants and would include restrooms, storage, bike storage facilities, creek crossings, highway overcrossing, and some benches. Users would be generally moving through the project site, and their presence would be short-term and temporary. Therefore, the proposed project's potential risk of loss, injury, or death to people or structures would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, impact.

Hazards and hazardous materials impacts are typically site specific and do not combine with other reasonably foreseeable projects to contribute towards cumulative impacts; therefore, the proposed project's affect on hazards and hazardous materials would be not be considered cumulatively considerable and there would be *no cumulative impact*.

### HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The proposed project would result in the generation of wastewater, increase the demand for potable water, alter existing drainage patterns, and be located within the 100-foot floodplain; however, all of these potential impacts would be considered less than significant as described below.

#### Wastewater

The proposed project would include construction of restrooms at the trailhead at the Octagon Barn Center. These restrooms would be vault restrooms, and the existing collection and treatment system has ample capacity to accommodate the project. Therefore, the proposed project would not violate any waste discharge requirements, and this would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact.

The proposed project's incremental increase in wastewater generation combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects within the treatment plant's service area would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the proposed project's cumulative effect on wastewater generation would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

#### Groundwater

The only potable water required by the project is associated with irrigation in areas where it will be necessary to establish landscaping. This increased water demand would be negligible and would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies, and the project itself would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. Therefore, the proposed project's impact on groundwater resources would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact.

The proposed project's incremental increased demand on groundwater resources for landscaping, when combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects within the groundwater basin, would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable as the demand is negligible. Therefore, the proposed project's cumulative effect on groundwater resources would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### Drainage and Water Quality

The proposed project would result in some work near SLO Creek and introduce new impervious surface area for the pathway. The proposed project includes voluntary mitigation measure VM 1.1, which would minimize the amount and rate of off-site runoff, and incorporate best management practices during and post construction. As discussed in Section 2.3, Biological and Natural Resources, implementation of mitigation measures **MM 2.3-4a**, **MM 2.3-4f**, and **MM 2.3-4h** would require a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG); coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Board (SWRCB/RWQCB) regarding the need for a Section 13263(a) general waste discharge requirement (WDR); and implementation of a Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Response Plan, erosion control plans, and a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP). Therefore, any runoff generated by the proposed project would not result in substantial erosion, siltation, flooding, or contamination, or otherwise substantially degrade water quality. This would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact.

The proposed project's incremental contribution to runoff volumes and water quality, combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects within the watershed, would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable because the project will fully mitigate impacts on site. Therefore, the proposed project's cumulative effect on drainage and water quality would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### Flooding

Although portions of the APE are located within the 100-year floodplain, no housing is proposed, most of the pathway would be at grade level, and all bridge crossings would be truss structures that would be supported by 3-foot-wide abutment piers drilled outside the creek channel. As noted in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1**, trails may be a desired use for areas subject to flood hazards. Therefore, the proposed project would not impede or redirect flood flows. This would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact.

The project is a unique proposal that will place new pathway improvements in the floodplain; however, this project will not combine with other reasonably foreseeable projects to result in a cumulatively considerable impact. Therefore, the proposed project's cumulative effect on flooding would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### NOISE

The APE is located in an area with sparse rural residential land uses, which may be sensitive to noises. Noise levels in the project area would be regulated by the San Luis Obispo County Noise Element of the County General Plan. Noise from a fixed source or from a "use" is regulated to an average noise over one hour of 50 decibels (dB Leq) from 7 AM to 10 PM (daytime) and 45 (dB Leq) from 10 PM to 7 AM (nighttime). At no time can noise exceed 70 decibels (dB) during the daytime or 65 dB at nighttime. Exceptions to these standards are noise generated by activities conducted in public parks, public playgrounds, and public or private school grounds. Also exempt are noise sources associated with construction, provided such activities do not take

## SUMMARY

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place before 7 AM or after 9 PM on any day except Saturday or Sunday, or before 8 AM or after 5 PM on Saturday or Sunday. The proposed project would result in construction of a public recreation facility, which would be considered a public park; therefore, it would be exempt from the fixed source or use noise standards. In addition, implementation of voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** would minimize noise impacts by limiting the hours of construction consistent with the County Noise Ordinance.

Due to the proximity of the preferred pathway alignment to existing sensitive noise receptors, surrounding vegetation, and existing noise ambient levels, the noise levels associated with the proposed project would not result in a substantial permanent increase (greater than 5 dB) in ambient noise. Where construction activities would occur near sensitive receptors, construction hours shall be limited to between 7 AM and 9 PM Monday through Friday and between 8 AM and 5 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore, this would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, project impact.

The project's incremental contribution towards increased noise levels, when combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects within the Highway 101 corridor between the City of San Luis Obispo and Avila Beach, would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the proposed project's effect on noise levels would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### PUBLIC SERVICES

#### Police

Police protection within the project area is provided by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office. The project site is in the jurisdiction of the Coast Station, which is located at 2099 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Los Osos. Other nearby patrol stations include the Oceano Station, located at 1681 Front Street in Oceano, and Patrol Headquarters at 1584 Kansas Avenue in San Luis Obispo.

The proposed project would construct a pathway, which is typically not a land use that results in an increased demand for police protection. However, it would expand public accessibility to adjacent agricultural fields and otherwise unpopulated areas, increasing the potential for crimes associated with trespassing onto private property, which in turn may generate additional calls or patrolling of the area by the Rural Crime Unit. The project includes fencing between the pathway and along sections of agricultural land to deter trespassing, but no amount of fencing would fully eliminate the potential for trespass. Mitigation measures provided in Section 2.2, Agricultural Resources, are provided to reduce potential conflicts between agricultural operators and nonagricultural users by requiring preparation of a Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan, which includes methods for minimizing trespassing and disturbance by trail users, and requires signage at the trailheads that warns trail users to stay on designated trails, and prohibits picking. These measures would help minimize the potential for trespassing and increased demand on the Rural Crime Unit. In any case, the proposed project would not result in an increased demand for police protection that requires the need for new facilities in order to maintain service response ratios, or the physical construction of such facilities. This would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, impact.

#### Fire and Emergency Response

Most of the project area is in a moderate to high fire hazard area. Fire protection to the area is provided by CALFIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire. The closest station is Avila Valley Station 62, which is located at 1551 Sparrow Road, San Luis Obispo. Emergency response times to the

project area vary from 5 to 15 minutes. Station 62 has an ICS Type-1 Engine and a regional Breathing Support. The engine is staffed with two permanent CALFIRE employees, one fire apparatus engineer, and a fire captain. The station is supported by 25 member paid call firefighters who are dispatched via radio pager and respond either directly to the incident or to the fire station, depending on the type of call and its location. The proposed project would not result in the construction of any major structures that would result in an increase in population or a substantial increased demand for emergency services. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in an increased demand for fire protection that requires the need for new facilities in order to maintain service response ratios. This would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, impact.

The project's incremental contribution towards increased demand for police and fire protection services, combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects within the Highway 101 corridor between the City of San Luis Obispo and Avila Beach would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative demand for service would not trigger staffing thresholds or cause the construction of new facilities. Therefore, the proposed project's effects on police and fire protection services would be considered **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impacts.

## RECREATION AND PARKS

The proposed project would result in the construction/expansion of a recreation facility that may potentially result in physical impacts to the environment and would likely increase the use of the previously completed 2.25-mile section of the Bob Jones Pathway.

The construction/expansion of this recreation facility would result in physical impacts to the environment. Potential impacts would be limited to aesthetics/visual resources, agricultural resources, biological and natural resources, cultural resources, land use and planning, and traffic, which are in Section 2.0, Impact Analysis. Mitigation measures provided within this document would reduce all construction-related impacts to a less than significant level. This would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, impact.

The proposed project would connect Avila Beach and the City of San Luis Obispo, which would likely increase use of the existing 2.25-mile section of pathway that currently exists between the Ontario Road Staging Area and Avila Beach village. The existing and future sections of the pathway are primarily administered and maintained by the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency–Parks Division, with portions under the jurisdiction of the City of San Luis Obispo. The proposed project has been included in the *San Luis Obispo Bikeways Plan 2010 Update* (SLOCO 2010b) and the SLOCOG (2012) *2010 Regional Transportation Plan – Preliminary Sustainability Communities Strategy*, as well as in the *San Luis Obispo County General Plan – Park and Recreation Element* (SLOCO 2006). The proposed project is a programmed improvement; therefore, the increased use on the existing section of pathway has been anticipated, intended, and planned for and would not be considered substantial. Because this facility would be implemented as planned and would provide a clear recreational benefit, this would be considered a **Class IV, beneficial**, impact.

The project's incremental contribution towards increased demand on existing trail facilities, combined with other reasonably foreseeable segments of the BJP would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable, as the pathway would be used as intended. Therefore, the proposed project's effects on recreation and parks are considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

## SUMMARY

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### UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

The proposed project will not result in an increased demand for treatment or conveyance of wastewater and/or potable water that would result in the construction or expansion of existing or new facilities. The only water demand would be associated with restrooms at the trailhead near the Octagon Barn Center, which would not exceed the capacity of existing entitlements for the Octagon Barn Center property. The proposed project would not be connected to a stormwater drainage system nor require the expansion of gas or electric service. In addition, the proposed project would not generate solid waste to a level that would exceed the permit capacity of the landfill. Section 8.12.250 of the San Luis Obispo County Code requires the placement and maintenance of litter and recycling receptacles in accordance with Section 17830 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. For these reasons, impacts to utility and service systems would be considered **Class III, less than significant**, project impacts.

The project's incremental contribution towards increased demand for utilities and service systems, combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects within the San Luis Bay Inland planning area would not result in effects that would be cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the proposed project's effects on utilities and service systems are considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### S.3 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY/FOCUS AREAS

Based on the project information prepared to date, consultations with County departments, and comments received during the NOP public review period, the following areas have been identified as potentially controversial and/or areas of probable environmental impact. The findings for each subject area are summarized below. Supporting information and analysis is contained in Section 2.0 of this EIR.

- Aesthetics/Visual Resources
- Agricultural Resources
- Biological and Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Transportation and Circulation

### AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES

Development of the proposed bridge along San Luis Bay Drive and the Highway 101 overcrossing would potentially result in a change to existing natural landscapes and public views. The environmental setting, regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures associated with aesthetics/visual resources are described in detail in Section 2.1, Aesthetics/Visual Resources, of this EIR (Volume I CD) and summarized below in subsection S.4.

### AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

The proposed BJP would be located in close proximity to agricultural operations in several locations. As such, development of the project may affect adjacent agricultural operations by

utilizing portions of the agricultural road and/or operations for the path. The environmental setting, regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures associated with agricultural resources are described in detail in Section 2.2, Agricultural Resources, of this EIR (Volume I CD) and summarized below in subsection S.4.

#### BIOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Project development may result in potential impacts to special-status species and critical or sensitive habitat. The project could also result in the removal of trees at certain proposed bridge locations. The environmental setting, regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures associated with biological and natural resources are described in detail in Section 2.3, Biological and Natural Resources, of this EIR (Volume I CD) and summarized below in subsection S.4.

#### CULTURAL RESOURCES

Construction activities associated with the proposed project may result in significant impacts on known and undiscovered historic and cultural resources. The environmental setting, regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures associated with cultural resources are described in detail in Section 2.4, Cultural Resources, of this EIR (Volume I CD) and summarized below in subsection S.4.

#### LAND USE AND PLANNING

Potential conflicts may arise related to ownership patterns and County policy. The environmental setting, regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures associated with land use and planning are described in detail in Section 2.5, Land Use and Planning, of this EIR (Volume I CD) and summarized below in subsection S.4.

#### TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Potential safety issues and consistency with design standards may arise related to the proposed at-grade crossings at South Higuera Street. The environmental setting, regulatory setting, impacts, and mitigation measures associated with land use and planning are described in detail in Section 2.6, Traffic and Circulation, of this EIR (Volume I CD) and summarized below in subsection S.4.

### S.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

This section summarizes the environmental setting, project impacts, and mitigation measures for each of the focus areas as described above. Detailed information regarding the environmental and regulatory setting, as well as detailed impact analysis, is provided in the corresponding impact analysis section included in Section 2.0.

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15123(b)(1) provides that the summary shall identify each significant effect with proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect. This information is summarized below under each focus area. The significance of each impact is also shown, both before and after implementation of mitigation, as follows:

- **Class I.** Significant and Unavoidable: An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an

## SUMMARY

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impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved, per Section 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

- **Class II.** Significant but Mitigable: An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.
- **Class III.** Less than Significant: An impact that may be adverse but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **Class IV.** Beneficial: An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Levels of significance are determined by comparing the impact to thresholds of significance as described under each environmental issue area in Section 2.0 of this DEIR.

## AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Aesthetics/Visual Resources – Environmental Setting**

The general character of the project area is agricultural with scattered residences. The adjacent hills, known as the Irish Hills, are a significant natural feature of this area. The majority of the proposed path would be separated from existing streets and parallel to Highway 101 and the SLO Creek corridor. The pathway will be located mainly in a natural setting, with 50 percent of the route adjacent to orchards and fields.

The project area is located adjacent to Highway 101 within a community separator, a rural landscape area, between San Luis Obispo and Avila Beach. The Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) of the General Plan suggests that several roadways, including Highway 101, should be designated scenic corridors (see COSE Table VR-2). At this time, however, Highway 101 is not an officially designated scenic corridor. The County has adopted Highway Corridor Design Standards for portions of Highway 101 (San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance §22.108.020). The development standards are applicable to residential and related development located in specifically designated Sensitive Resource Areas (SRAs) and within 100 feet of the roadway. The proposed project is not subject to design requirements of the Land use Ordinance; however, it is subject to the policies of the General Plan.

Those traveling through the project area will have varying sensitivities regarding changes to the visual environment. Viewers' activities and expectations affect each viewer's sensitivity level. The number of potential viewers and the duration and dominance of views are important factors to consider, as well as anticipated public opinion regarding the established visual character of the landscape. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the proposed project was prepared by Wallace Group in conjunction with SWCA Environmental Consultants in January 2010 (Wallace Group 2010), which is included in **Technical Appendix T1** of this DEIR. The VIA established eleven key viewing areas (KVAs) as representative viewpoints of the proposed project. According to the VIA, the overall area has moderately high visual sensitivity, high visibility due to proximity to Highway 101, and moderately high visual quality. However, the visual sensitivity of each segment of the BJP varies as summarized in **Table 2.1-1**. The proposed highway overcrossing within Segment 5 would be considered the most dominant visual feature of the proposed project with the highest visibility.

Below is a summary of the identified project impacts and mitigation measures. Standard mitigation measures from Appendix F of the PRE that are included in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** are summarized in Section S.2.2. A more detailed analysis of aesthetics/visual resources is provided in Section 2.1, Aesthetics/Visual Resources.

## SUMMARY

Aesthetics/Visual Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
<b>Adverse Effect on a Scenic Vista</b>		
There are no officially designated scenic vistas within the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have <b>no impact</b> on a scenic vista.		
<b>Light and Glare</b>		
Implementation of the proposed project will not introduce new sources of light and glare. Therefore, <b>no impacts</b> to daytime or nighttime views within the county are expected.		
<b>Substantially Damage Scenic Resources Within a State Scenic Highway</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.1-1</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the removal of vegetation, disturbance of land, and development of a new pathway, three bridges, and an overcrossing. These project components may result in short- and long-term effects to scenic resources adjacent to Highway 101. Although this section of Highway 101 is not currently a designated State Scenic Highway, County-adopted Highway Corridor Design Standards are applicable to two parcels within Segments 2 and 3.</p>	<p>Compliance with voluntary mitigation measure <b>VMM 1.1</b> would ensure that grading and landform alterations are minimized to the extent feasible and blend with the natural topography by following existing contours where feasible.</p> <p><b>MM 2.1-1a</b> For land within the project’s footprint under the County’s jurisdiction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall retain a qualified professional to select appropriate native plant materials (i.e., ground cover for pathway shoulders, shrubs and trees for areas where these plants have been removed in the area of proposed bridges) that will cover graded cut and fill slopes and that are compatible with adjacent vegetation to minimize visual impacts. Selected species shall be compatible with the requirements of the Environmental Coordinator, or its designee. Landscape and planting plans shall be submitted to San Luis Obispo County Parks and the Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, for review and approval prior to start of construction. Re-vegetation of disturbed areas shall occur concurrent with construction. The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator or its designee shall be responsible for mitigation monitoring to ensure mitigation planting is installed and maintained for five</p>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of the mitigation measures combined with voluntary mitigation measure <b>VMM 1.1</b> would ensure that short-term adverse effects to visual resources are minimized by requiring a re-vegetation plan for disturbed areas and immediate implementation of the approved plantings and that those plantings are monitored and maintained for a period of five years.</p> <p>Compliance with voluntary mitigation measure <b>VMM 1.1</b> would also require that grading and landform alterations are minimized to the extent feasible and blend with the natural topography by following existing contours where feasible. In addition, new structures visible from the public right-of-way shall not silhouette against the sky, shall be low-profile, and colors shall complement the surroundings. Furthermore, implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.1-1a, MM 2.1-1b, MM 2.1-2a</b> through <b>MM 2.1-2f, MM 2.3-1a, MM 2.3-1b, MM 2.3-4g, and MM 2.3-7</b> would all serve to minimize vegetation removal and trimming, require special landscaping treatment along the highway corridor to maximize screening, and require design limitations for bridge structures to limit visibility. Proposed improvements adjacent to the Octagon Barn would include a 10,000-square-foot trailhead, approximately 65 additional parking spaces (a total of 112 parking spaces), storage and restrooms, and bike parking facilities. Implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.4-1b</b> would ensure that proposed trailhead improvements are consistent with the previously approved restoration activities at the Octagon Barn Center and ensure that the integrity of the historic Octagon Barn itself is not damaged. With implementation of these measures, impacts to scenic resources along Highway 101 would be effectively mitigated.</p>

Aesthetics/Visual Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
	<p>years.</p> <p><b>MM 2.1-1b</b> For land within the project's footprint under Caltrans jurisdiction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall select appropriate plant materials that will cover graded cut and fill slopes and that are compatible with adjacent vegetation to minimize visual impacts. Selected species shall be compatible with Caltrans requirements and landscape standards. Plans shall be submitted to Caltrans or its designee for review and approval prior to start of construction. Re-vegetation of disturbed areas shall occur concurrent with construction. The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator or its designee shall be responsible for mitigation monitoring to ensure mitigation planting is installed and maintained for five years.</p>	
<b>Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.1-2</b> Implementation of the proposed project may result in the degradation of the existing visual quality and/or character of the project area, which serves as a community separator, has moderately high visual sensitivity and quality, and high visibility.</p> <p>The removal of vegetation may increase visibility of the at-grade pathway and bridge improvements, which may decrease visual quality and would be considered a potentially significant impact.</p> <p>Although the visual quality rating would decrease by more than 1.0 at KVA 5-3, the existing visual quality rating at KVA 5-3 is moderate. Since the existing visual quality rating is less than moderately-high, the decrease in the visual quality rating at KVA</p>	<p><b>MM 2.1-2a</b> The San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall design the bridge structure and pathway improvements between Venado Lane and the end of Segment 2 and adjacent to Monte Road within Segment 3 in accordance with the Highway Corridor Design Standards. In addition, the bridge structure at the SLO Creek crossing within Segment 2 (Bunnell Bridge) shall have a maximum height limit that does not exceed an elevation of 80 feet (North American Vertical Datum 88 (NAVD88)), which equates to roughly 8 feet above the adjacent northbound Highway 101 lane, in order to reduce the vertical dimension of the structure and the potential for visual intrusion into the viewshed.</p> <p><b>MM 2.1-2b</b> The San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall utilize some</p>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.1-2a</b> through <b>2.1-2c</b> would reduce potential impacts associated with the construction of the pathway and bridge structures by establishing height limits and ensuring compliance with Highway Corridor Design Standards for the proposed Bunnell Bridge structure; requiring a truss configuration for the proposed San Luis Bay Bridge; and by requiring a landscape plan that provides maximum screening of new structures. These measures would reduce the proposed at-grade and bridge improvement's affect on visual character to a less than significant level.</p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.1-1a</b> and <b>2.1-1b</b> would reduce any potential increase visibility of the at-grade pathway by ensuring that any disturbed areas are revegetated and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure that any new plants are well established.</p>

**SUMMARY**

<b>Aesthetics/Visual Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary</b>		
<b>Summary of Impacts</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Resulting Level of Significance/Findings</b>
<p>5-3 would not result in a significant short- and/or long-term effect on the visual quality of the area. In addition, visibility of the overcrossing structure may be desired since a pedestrian/bicycle overcrossing represents the community goal of encouraging the use of and investing in safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities. As the proposed overcrossing would not result in a visual quality rating or moderately-high or greater being decreased by 1.0, this would be considered a Class III, less than significant, project impact.</p>	<p>form of truss configuration and limit the maximum height of the bridge structure at the SLO Creek crossing within Segment 4 (new San Luis Bay Bridge) to an elevation of 80 feet (NAVD88), which equates to roughly 10 feet above the adjacent San Luis Bay Drive Bridge deck, to reduce the vertical dimension of the structure and the potential for visual intrusion into the viewshed.</p> <p><b>MM 2.1-2c</b> The San Luis Obispo County Services Agency shall prepare a landscape plan that provides maximum feasible screening of all new structures (i.e., bridges, ramps, retaining walls) when seen from adjacent roadways. New trees shall be planted in conformity with County lists and shall be compatible with adjacent vegetation to supplement the screening of the bridge structures as seen from Highway 101 and San Luis Bay Drive. The design shall be prepared by a qualified professional and plans shall be approved by the Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, prior to start of construction. All revegetation and planting shall be implemented concurrent with project construction. The Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall be responsible for mitigation monitoring to ensure mitigation planting is installed and maintained for five years.</p>	<p>In addition to compliance with voluntary mitigation measure <b>VMM 1.1</b>, implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.1-2a</b> through <b>MM 2.1-2c</b> would reduce the significance of potential impacts associated with the construction of the pathway and bridge structures by establishing height limits and ensuring compliance with Highway Corridor Design Standards for the proposed Bunnell Bridge structure; requiring a truss configuration for the proposed San Luis Bay Bridge; and by requiring a landscape plan that provides maximum screening of new structures. These measures would ensure that the proposed structures do not result in substantial degradation of the existing visual character and quality of the area.</p>

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Agricultural Resources – Environmental Setting**

The project area has been used for agriculture for many years. Proximity to the City of San Luis Obispo and South County markets, access to Highway 101, and availability of water make the area productive for high value crops such as apples, tomatoes, squash, and other row crops. Production can occur year round due to favorable climate and soil conditions. There are approximately 149 acres designated for Agricultural land use within the project area; however, the study area includes the entire channel of SLO Creek and multiple potential trail routes.

According to soil survey maps, eleven soil units are present within the project area of potential effect (APE) as shown in **Figure 2.2-1**. A summary of the soil characteristics is provided in **Table 2.2-1**, including Land Capability Classification (LCC), Storie Index rating, and whether or not it is considered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to be Prime Farmland. The USDA-NRCS assesses potential and/or existing agricultural productivity by utilizing the LCC system, which classifies soil units based on limitations for field crop production, the risk of damage due to crop production, and how the soil responds to management. Every LCC is represented within the project area, with the exception of LCC V, as summarized in **Table 2.2-1**. The Storie Index is a soil rating based on soil properties that govern a soil's potential for cultivated agriculture in California. Every Storie Index rating is represented within the project area, as summarized in **Table 2.2-1**.

According to the California Department of Conservation (CDC), Division of Land Resource Protection's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the project area encompasses approximately 79.5 acres of Prime Farmland, 0.4 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 4.8 acres of Unique Farmland, 38.7 acres of Farmland of Local Potential, and 15.0 acres of Grazing Land, with the remaining land designated as "other land" (refer to **Table 2.2-3** and **Figure 2.2-1**). According to the San Luis Obispo Williamson Act Land Map (CDC 2010b), two parcels within the project area (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 076-121-027 and -028) were enrolled in the Williamson Act and a Farmland Security Zone contract (Prime Agriculture Land) as of January 2009 (as shown in **Figure 2.2-2**).

Below is a summary of the identified project impacts and mitigation measures. Standard mitigation measures from Appendix F of the PRE that are included in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** are summarized in Section S.2.2. A more detailed analysis of agricultural resources is provided in Section 2.2, Agricultural Resources. An Agriculture Report for the proposed project was prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants in February 2012 (SWCA 2012a), which is included in **Technical Appendix T2** of this DEIR.

## SUMMARY

Agricultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
<b>Conversion of Important Farmland (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance)</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.2-1</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the conversion of approximately 1.6 acres of important farmland (1.4 acres designated Prime and 0.2 acre of Unique Farmland) to nonagricultural uses, which represents a loss of approximately 1.89 percent of the 84.7 acres of important farmland designated within the area of potential effect (APE). When existing farmland constraints and ownership patterns are considered, however, the amount of productive Prime and/or Unique Farmland that would be converted to non-agricultural uses would be reduced from 1.6 acres to 0.5 acres.</p>	<p>No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure necessary.</p>	<p><b>Class III, Less than Significant</b></p> <p>The proposed project has been designed to avoid bisecting important farmland and limit impact to farmland to the margins of existing agricultural operations. Proximity of the existing important farmland to public roadways further limits existing agricultural operations on the important farmland that would be converted to non-agricultural uses. In addition, the conversion of farmland would occur over several parcels not one parcel of farmland; therefore, the loss of farmland would not be concentrated on one land owner. Based on the minimal quantity of productive important farmland to be converted, existing limitations on that property due to proximity to public roadways, the conversion of 1.6 acres of important farmland (0.5 acres of productive important farmland) would be considered a less than significant impact.</p>
<b>Conversion of Williamson Act Land</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.2-2</b> Implementation of the proposed project may convert land under Williamson Act contract to nonagricultural use.</p>	<p>No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure necessary.</p>	<p><b>Class III, Less than Significant</b></p> <p>The San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Preserve Review Committee determined on October 30, 2006, that the proposed project would not impact the existing agriculture preserve (SWCA 2012a).</p>
<b>Conflict with Existing Agricultural Operations</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.2-3</b> Implementation of the proposed project may result in the disruption of and/or conflicts with existing agricultural operations by encroaching on access points and roadways and/or through the introduction of a new nonagricultural population to an agricultural area, increasing the potential for trespassing, and potentially exposing the public to active agricultural operations and related hazards.</p>	<p><b>MM 2.2-3a</b> Prior to commencing construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency, in coordination with property owners and the San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture, shall develop and implement a Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan. The Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan shall be subject to review and approval by the San Luis Obispo Environmental Coordinator and shall include, at a minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Methods for minimizing trespassing and</li> </ol>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.2-3a</b> through <b>MM 2.2-3f</b> would minimize disruption of existing agricultural access roadways by requiring a coordinated effort to prepare a plan that educates users on ways to respect and appreciate the importance of agriculture in the area; design the final alignment to minimize disruption of existing agricultural operations ensure that domestic pets do not contaminate agricultural products; and ensures that the measures of the plan and San Luis Obispo General Plan Parks and Recreation Element are incorporated into the final design drawings. Implementation of the above mitigation measures would reduce the proposed project's potential to conflict with existing agricultural</p>

Agricultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
	<p>disturbance by trail users;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Procedures for minimizing pesticide exposure (notification, pathway closure, etc.);</li> <li>3. Rules to minimize conflicts between domestic animals and livestock;</li> <li>4. Establishment of potential temporary pathway closure procedures; and</li> <li>5. Examples of the signage, striping, and fencing required.</li> </ol> <p><b>MM 2.2-3b</b> As part of the Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan required through implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.2-3a</b>, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall provide signage that describes the importance of the local agricultural lands and educate the public/users how to respect the surrounding important resources and reduce conflicts, including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staying on designated trails;</li> <li>2. Maintaining control of domestic animals;</li> <li>3. Minimizing litter/waste;</li> <li>4. Prohibiting picking of crops; and</li> <li>5. Prohibiting the feeding of or contact with livestock.</li> </ol> <p>Signage shall be located at the trailheads and along portions of the pathway that are located adjacent to large private agricultural land holdings. All signage shall be installed prior to public use of the trail.</p> <p><b>MM 2.2-3c</b> As part of the Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan required through implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.2-3a</b>, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall design the pathway alignment to avoid agricultural roads to the</p>	<p>operations to less than significant level.</p>

**SUMMARY**

<b>Agricultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary</b>		
<b>Summary of Impacts</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Resulting Level of Significance/Findings</b>
	<p>greatest extent feasible by locating the pathway alignment within existing rights-of-way and/or on ruderal lands. In addition, pathway alignment and intersections shall be designed to minimize conflicts with agricultural operations through use of deterring devices such as fencing, striping, signage, bollards, and paving. Pavement and intersection development standards shall be identified and accommodate use by agricultural machinery and vehicles at all pathway/agricultural road intersection locations in order to minimize maintenance requirements where the pathway crosses agricultural roads. All methods of reducing conflict shall be demonstrated on final construction documents and will be subject to review and approval by the San Luis Obispo Environmental Coordinator.</p> <p><b>MM 2.2-3d</b> As part of the Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan required through implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.2-3a</b>, circumstances that require temporary pathway closure shall be clearly defined. Such circumstances may include routine maintenance, agricultural spraying, or potential and/or actual flood conditions. The timing of and average duration of routine temporary closures shall be clearly defined in the Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan. Every effort shall be made to schedule temporary pathway closures during non-peak pathway usage periods, which are typically weekends, holidays, and commute hours. Any temporary closures shall be clearly posted at the trailheads, parking areas, and point of closure. The notification shall identify the reason for the closure, time and date of closure, and duration of closure. Signage shall be posted at least 24</p>	

Agricultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
	<p>hours prior to closure and removed immediately upon the identified duration or being cleared for re-opening by the San Luis Obispo Environmental Coordinator.</p> <p><b>MM 2.2-3e</b> Prior to issuance of grading permit, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall ensure that final construction documents include the requirements of the Farmland Conflict Reduction Plan and that the design is consistent with Appendices B, E, and F of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan - Parks and Recreation Element. Plans shall be subject to review and approval by the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator.</p>	
<b>Increase Runoff Onto Adjacent Agricultural Land</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.2-4</b> Implementation of the proposed project may affect local drainage patterns by increasing runoff onto adjacent agricultural lands.</p>	<p><b>MM 2.2-4a</b> Prior to preparation of final construction drawings, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall ensure that the proposed project minimizes the quantity and rate of runoff off-site. The pathway shall be graded to convey runoff to away from agricultural crops, orchards and/or fields to reduce runoff onto adjacent agricultural lands.</p> <p><b>MM 2.2-4b</b> Prior to use of the BJP and throughout the life of the project, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall provide refuse bags and disposal cans for domestic animal waste at the trailheads and at accessible, serviceable points along the route.</p>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.2-4a</b> and <b>MM 2.2-4b</b>, <b>MM 2.3-4h</b>, and compliance with local regulations would ensure that local runoff onto adjacent agricultural land does not result in an adverse effect by considering the use of effective methods to increase infiltration and reduce runoff; providing refuse bags for domestic animal waste at staging areas; and preparing and implementing sedimentation plans, erosion control plans, and a stormwater pollution prevention plan.</p>

**SUMMARY**

<b>Agricultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary</b>		
<b>Summary of Impacts</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Resulting Level of Significance/Findings</b>
<b>Loss of Forestland</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.2-5</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the permanent disturbance of 0.90 acre of riparian habitat along the SLO Creek corridor, which contains riparian forest.</p>	<p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-1a</b>, <b>MM 2.3-4b-c</b>, <b>MM 2.3-4e</b>, <b>2.3-4g</b>, and <b>MM 2.3-4i</b>.</p>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-1a</b>, <b>MM 2.3-4b-c</b>, <b>MM 2.3-4e</b>, <b>MM 2.3-4g</b>, and <b>MM 2.3-4i</b> would reduce potential impacts to riparian forestland by requiring the preparation and implementation of a final Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan, engaging a biological monitor, restricting construction activities, minimizing tree removal and pruning, and requiring preparation and implementation of a Construction Management Plan. Specifically, mitigation measure <b>MM 2.3-4g</b> requires the applicant to prepare a plan for minimizing the trimming and removal of trees to the extent feasible. The plan requires the project to avoid the potential for unnecessary removal or trimming of trees, with any trees to be removed marked with colored flagging or other suitable material. After construction, any loss of riparian trees is required to be replaced at a ratio of 3:1, or as otherwise directed by regulatory agencies. Methods for riparian vegetation replacement must be incorporated into the final Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan. The potential loss of forestland would be minimized by these measures and would have no adverse effect on the ability to manage water quality and fish and wildlife.</p>

## BIOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Biological and Natural Resources – Environmental Setting**Vegetative Communities

The biological study area (BSA) encompasses the following vegetative communities/habitats: agricultural land (66.0 acres); ruderal (disturbed) (14.6 acres); landscaping/ornamental vegetation (including groundcover and planted trees) (1.2 acres); non-native annual grassland (12.8 acres); serpentine bunchgrass (0.6 acres); coastal scrub (7.0 acres); coast live oak woodland (2.1 acres); riparian (including riparian forest, riparian scrub, freshwater marsh, and riverine habitats) (30.7 acres); and seasonal wetlands (0.2 acres) as depicted in **Figure 2.3-1**.

Other Important Natural Communities

Other natural communities are considered important because of the abundance of species they support, their limited distribution, or because they provide a means for migration and/or breeding. The BSA contains two types of important natural communities: wetlands and other waters, and riparian corridors/migration and travel corridors.

As summarized in **Table 2.3-2**, the BSA contains approximately 5.87 acres of USACE jurisdictional wetlands and other waters and 25.2 acres of CDFW jurisdictional areas. These areas were identified along SLO Creek, its tributaries, and drainages with connectivity to SLO Creek and exhibited ordinary high water marks and are shown in **Figure 2.3-2**.

SLO Creek and sections of its tributaries provide riparian corridors within the BSA (SWCA 2012b). Riparian vegetation provides important roosting and foraging habitat for migratory bird species, regulates water temperatures, and provides, directly or indirectly, food sources for aquatic organisms. Riparian habitats serve as migratory corridors for wildlife, and as such, are important in linking non-contiguous or fragmented wildlife habitats. SLO Creek provides a migration and travel corridor for steelhead trout and other aquatic species. No barriers to aquatic species migration have been observed within the BSA. The riparian corridor of SLO Creek contains sufficient tree canopy to provide suitable travel corridors for various birds and terrestrial wildlife species passing through surrounding developed areas.

Sensitive Habitats/Habitats of Concern

Based on a review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) database lists, the BSA has the potential to affect nine sensitive habitats (SWCA 2012b). However, based on a review of the local site conditions, it was determined that there was suitable or marginal habitat within the BSA to support only one of the nine sensitive habitats potentially occurring within the BSA; serpentine bunchgrass, a CNDDDB Sensitive Habitat that is restricted to serpentine rock sites in open grassland dominated by perennial bunchgrasses (SWCA 2012b). A small patch (0.57 acre) of serpentine bunchgrass habitat was

## SUMMARY

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### Biological and Natural Resources – Environmental Setting

identified present just south of the East Fork of SLO Creek within the BSA.

#### Invasive Species

According to the Natural Environment Study (NES), 36 invasive plant species were observed within the BSA (SWCA 2012b). Of the 36 species, 4 species had an invasiveness rating of High; 20 species had a rating of Moderate; and 12 species had a rating of Limited. The four plant highly invasive species included giant reed (*Arundo donax*), red brome (*Bromus madritensis*), iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*). The distribution of these invasive plant species is scattered throughout the BSA, with notable concentrations of giant reed along particular areas of the SLO Creek riparian corridor.

#### Special-Status Species

Special-status species include those species that are:

- 1) Federally or state listed as endangered, threatened, or rare; or
- 2) Candidates for federal or state listing as endangered, threatened or rare; or
- 3) Proposed for federal or state listing as endangered, threatened, or rare; or
- 4) Considered special concern species by the federal government or the CDFG (i.e., California Special Concern species), such as those that appear on the CNDDDB Special Animals List (SWCA 2012b).

Sensitive species also include species afforded protection or considered sensitive under various laws (e.g., CEQA, Migratory Bird Treaty Act) or under sections of the California Fish and Game Code (e.g., nesting birds), and those species recognized as locally important or sensitive by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) or the scientific community (SWCA 2012b).

Based on a review of the CNDDDB and USFWS database lists, the BSA has the potential to contain 65 special-status plant species and 64 special-status wildlife species (plus nesting birds and roosting bats) (SWCA 2012b). The names and legal status of each of these special-status species are identified in the NES included in **Technical Appendix T3**, as well as a general description of the habitat requirements for each, and whether suitable habitat is present (P) or absent (A) in the BSA. The rationale section summarizes the potential for each to occur within the BSA or be affected by the project.

Based on a review of the local site conditions, it was determined that there was suitable or marginal habitat within the BSA to support only 14 of the 65 special-status plant species and 18 of the 64 special-status wildlife species (plus nesting birds and roosting bats) potentially occurring within the BSA.

#### Special-Status Plant Species

Based on appropriately timed floristic surveys, the NES determined that the only special-status plant species observed or expected

**Biological and Natural Resources – Environmental Setting**

to occur within the BSA is the southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica* var. *californica*). This subspecies is considered to have a limited distribution and is on a "watch list" according to the CNPS (List 4.2) and was observed along the SLO Creek riparian corridor. This plant species is described in more detail in Chapter 2.3, Biological and Natural Resources.

Regional Animal Species of Concern

Based on field surveys conducted, 15 special-status wildlife species potentially occur within the BSA along with other nesting birds and roosting bats. Special-status wildlife species potentially occurring within the project area include steelhead-south/central California coast ESU (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), Coast Range newt (*Taricha torosa torosa*), California red-legged frog (CRLF) (*Rana aurora draytonii*), southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*), silvery legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), nesting birds, and roosting bats. The riparian, coastal scrub, and grassland natural communities within the project area provide suitable and/or marginal habitat for most of these special-status wildlife species. These species are described in more detail in Chapter 2.3, Biological and Natural Resources.

Below is a summary of the identified project impacts and mitigation measures. Additional voluntary mitigation measures incorporated into the project are summarized in Section S.2.2. A more detailed analysis of aesthetics/visual resources is provided in Section 2.3, Biological Resources.

Biological and Natural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
<b>Potentially Conflict With an Adopted Habitat Conservation Plan</b>		
There is no adopted habitat conservation plan (HCP) within the project area. The County is in the process of preparing an HCP for the northern and eastern portions of the county, but this HCP would not include the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have <b>no impact</b> on the HCP.		
<b>Substantial Adverse Effect on Special-Status Species and/or Their Habitat</b>		
<b>Impact 2.3-1</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the disturbance of habitat suitable to support potentially 13 special-status plant species and 16 special-status wildlife species.	<b>MM 2.3-1a</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall finalize a comprehensive Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), for review and approval by the County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, that specifies final	<b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b> Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> and <b>MM 2.3-1b</b> would reduce potential impacts to special-status species by requiring the preparation and implementation of a final Habitat Mitigation and Management Plan (HMMP) that would include compensatory mitigation options to offset impacts to habitat that supports various

**SUMMARY**

<b>Biological and Natural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary</b>		
<b>Summary of Impacts</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Resulting Level of Significance/Findings</b>
	<p>mitigation requirements for impacts to vegetation and natural habitats based on the requirements of permits and consultation with the resource agencies. The final HMMP shall be based on and generally consistent with the draft HMMP prepared by SWCA Environmental Consultants Inc. in February 2012, which is included as Appendix I of the NES (<b>Technical Appendix T3</b>). The final HMMP will identify the specific mitigation sites along the vicinity of the SLO Creek riparian corridor, based on the specific mitigation acreage required by regulatory agencies during the permitting process. The final HMMP shall be consistent with federal and state regulatory requirements and reflect any regulatory permit conditions, as required. The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall ensure implementation of mitigation requirements of the HMMP during construction and immediately following project completion. Measures identified in the final HMMP shall include at a minimum the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-site mitigation at the following minimum ratios, unless determined otherwise by a regulatory agency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-site mitigation (within areas in or near the SLO Creek watershed) for permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas would be implemented at a 2:1 ratio (the CDFW may require a replacement of 3:1 or more for trees removed);</li> <li>• Off-site mitigation for permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas would be implemented at a 3:1 ratio; and</li> <li>• On-site and/or off-site mitigation for temporary impacts to jurisdictional areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>special-status plant and wildlife species. These measures, in addition to site construction monitoring in the field consistent with regulatory guidelines, would fully mitigate the potential impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species.</p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-1a-b</b>, combined with <b>MM 2.3-4a-h</b>, would reduce impacts to south/central California coast steelhead ESU and its critical habitat (SLO Creek) by requiring the following: implementations the final comprehensive HMMP, which would be consistent with any subsequent permit requirements; obtaining a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFG; coordinating with the SWRCB/RWQCB regarding the need for a Section 13263(a) general waste discharge requirement (WDR); retaining a qualified biological monitor to ensure compliance mitigation measures; limiting site access and disturbance; an erosion control plan, stormwater pollution prevention plan, hazardous materials (HAZMAT) response plan, and a plan for minimizing the trimming and removal of trees; requiring replacement of riparian trees at a minimum 3:1 ratio; implementation of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) best management practices (BMPs); prohibiting refueling and cleaning of vehicles and equipment within 65 feet of the creek and pets on the construction site; and ensuring that workers are made aware of potential special-status species in the area and that appropriate actions are taken upon discovery of a special-status species. These measures would ensure that the proposed project’s effect on south-central California coast steelhead would be reduced to a less than significant level; however, additional mitigation would be necessary for other special-status wildlife species as discussed below.</p> <p>Implementation of the mitigation measure <b>MM 2.3-1e</b>, combined with <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> through <b>MM 2.3-1d</b>, would reduce impacts to Coast Range newt, southwestern pond turtle, silvery legless lizard, and two-striped garter snake to a less than significant level by requiring preparation and implementation of the final HMMP; completing an environmental training program,, and implementation of several measures to avoid water quality impacts, and by identifying and relocating (thus avoiding) the species prior to construction. However, additional mitigation would be required for</p>

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	<p>would be implemented at a 1:1 ratio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any loss of southern California black walnut trees shall be mitigated at a 4:1 restoration ratio for every walnut tree removed and at a 2:1 ratio for every walnut tree trimmed or otherwise impacted but not removed. If more than 25 percent of a walnut tree must be trimmed, it shall be mitigated at a 4:1 restoration ratio.</li> <li>Implementation of the restoration and mitigation activities will be conducted or overseen by an agency-approved restoration specialist. The restoration specialist will oversee site preparation and plant installation to ensure conformity with the final HMMP. Restoration and mitigation activities shall include, but are not limited to, plant salvage, site preparation and planting, installation of irrigation, and preparation and implementation of maintenance and monitoring plans.</li> <li>The maintenance plan shall address watering requirements, weed control, herbicide use, vandalism, and remedial plantings and fertilizing. The monitoring plan shall identify a monitoring schedule, performance goals, other attributes to monitor, and reporting requirements.</li> <li>Obtaining a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW and coordinating with the SWRCB/RWQCB regarding the need for a Section 13263(a) general waste discharge requirement (WDR) for project-related impacts that will occur in areas under the jurisdiction of these regulatory agencies.</li> </ul> <p><b>MM 2.3-1b</b> The San Luis Obispo County</p>	<p>the California red-legged frog, which is also a listed federally threatened species.</p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.3-1f</b>, combined with <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> through <b>MM 2.3-1e</b>, would reduce impacts to California red-legged frog species and their habitat by requiring preparation and implementation of the final HMMP; completing an environmental training program; conducting pre-construction surveys; implementing several measures to avoid water quality impacts; and implementing avoidance and management measures provided under the <i>Programmatic Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved Under the Federal Aid Program</i> (USFWS 2011). Therefore, potential impacts to California red-legged frog would be reduced to a less than significant level.</p>

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	<p>General Services Agency shall provide evidence of all necessary permit or authorizations from Federal and State Agencies, including the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW. Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, formal consultation shall be initiated with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for impacts to listed species (i.e. south-central California coast steelhead ESU). The HMMP required through implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> shall be updated within 30 days of issuance of any applicable permits to reflect specific permit requirements for observed special-status species. The updated HMMP shall be submitted for review and approval by the County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-1c</b> If any special-status species are observed in or near work areas during monitoring or construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall have a qualified biologist map, establish and mark off an exclusion zone, and avoid these species until the appropriate regulatory agencies (e.g., Caltrans, USFWS, and CDFW) are consulted for further mitigation options. Additional measures may include temporary halting of work, avoidance, relocation, or other measures as identified by the resource agencies, depending upon the specific species and its distribution.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-1d</b> Prior to commencement of construction, San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall have a qualified biologist prepare and conduct a worker environmental</p>	

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	<p>training program. The environmental training program shall include descriptions of all special-status species with the potential to occur within the project area, their ecology, legal status, the need for conservation of the species, and what to do if one is observed. The environmental training program shall be subject to review and approval by the County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee. All construction personnel conducting work within habitat that potentially supports these species shall participate in the training program conducted by a qualified biologist. Evidence of participation in the environmental training program shall be submitted to the County Environmental Coordinator on a quarterly basis.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-1e</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall have a qualified biologist conduct pre-construction surveys for Coast Range newts, southwestern pond turtles, silvery legless lizards, and two-striped garter snakes and any other California Special Concern species or other special-status species identified in areas along and adjacent to the SLO Creek corridor where construction will occur. The County General Services Agency shall obtain a letter of permission from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to relocate identified California Special Concern species from work areas encountered during construction as necessary. A qualified biologists shall capture and relocate any California Special Concern species or other special-status species (if present) to suitable habitat outside of the area of impact. Observations of California Special Concern species or other special-status species shall be</p>	

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	<p>documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to CDFW and the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, upon project completion.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-1f</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall implement recommended avoidance and minimization measures for CRLF provided under the <i>Programmatic Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved Under the Federal Aid Program</i> as noted in the NES (<b>Technical Appendix T3</b>) and as summarized below. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to ground disturbance, a USFWS-approved biologist shall survey the project area no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If any life stage of the CRLF is found and these individuals are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist shall be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work activities begin. The USFWS-approved biologist shall relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The USFWS-approved biologist shall maintain detailed records of any individuals that are moved (e.g., size, coloration, any distinguishing features, photographs [digital preferred]) to assist him or her in determining whether translocated animals are returning to the point of capture.</li> <li>• Prior to any activities beginning on the project site, a USFWS-approved biologist shall</li> </ul>	

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	<p>conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the CRLF for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished. Brochures, books, and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is on hand to answer any questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A USFWS-approved biologist shall be present at the work site until all CRLFs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, the state or local sponsoring agency shall designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures as required under the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.</li> <li>• All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet (18 meters) from the riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from which a spill would drain directly toward aquatic habitat. The monitor shall ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations.</li> <li>• Project areas shall be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials shall be used to the extent practicable. Invasive, exotic plants shall be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the USFWS and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or</li> </ul>	

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	<p>modification of original contours would not benefit the CRLF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary.</li> <li>• Work shall be scheduled for the times of the year when impacts to the CRLF would be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall.</li> <li>• Best management practices (BMPs) shall be implemented to control sedimentation during and after project implementation.</li> <li>• If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch (5 mm) to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction.</li> <li>• Water shall not be impounded in a manner that may attract CRLFs.</li> <li>• Exotic species, such as bullfrogs (<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>), crayfish, and centrarchid fishes shall be permanently removed by a USFWS-approved biologist to the maximum extent possible.</li> <li>• The use of herbicides is prohibited as the primary method to control invasive, exotic</li> </ul>	

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	<p>plants.</p> <p>Evidence of compliance with the recommended avoidance and minimization measures for CRLF shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator on a quarterly basis.</p>	
Substantial Adverse Effect on Candidate, Sensitive, or Special-Status Avian Species and Other Nesting Birds		
<p><b>Impact 2.3-2</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the disturbance of habitat suitable to support special-status avian species, including Cooper’s hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>), sharp-shinned hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus</i>), white-tailed kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>), western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>), loggerhead shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>), least Bell’s vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>), purple martin (<i>Progne subis</i>), yellow warbler (<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i>), and yellow-breasted chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>), as well as other nesting birds (Class Aves). These species are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the California Fish and Game Code.</p>	<p><b>MM 2.3-2a</b> Prior to issuance of any permit, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall document on all final construction documents that vegetation removal shall occur outside of the nesting season (September 1 to February 14), wherever possible, to prevent birds from nesting within areas of disturbance during or just prior to construction. These timing requirements shall confirmed by the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-2b</b> If construction activities are proposed to occur during the typical nesting season (February 15 to August 31) within 200 feet (60 meters) of potential nesting habitat or 100 feet of the existing South Higuera bridge, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall have a qualified biologist conduct pre-construction surveys for nesting birds (including swallows) in potential nesting habitat. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted at least two weeks prior to construction to determine presence/absence of nesting birds within the project area. The USFWS and/or the CDFW shall be contacted if any listed bird species are observed during surveys and consulted for additional guidance if nesting birds are observed within or near the</p>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-2a</b> and <b>MM 2.3-2b</b> would reduce potential impacts to special-status and other nesting species by requiring vegetation removal to occur outside the nesting season if possible; requiring pre-construction surveys when vegetation removal is proposed during nesting season; prohibiting construction activities within 100 feet of active bird nests and 200 feet of active raptor nests; and requiring further consultation upon identification of active nesting birds. These measures serve to directly avoid avian species and their habitats, which would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.</p>

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	boundaries of the project site. Nests, eggs, or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code shall not be moved or disturbed until the end of the nesting season or until young fledge, whichever is later, nor shall adult birds be killed, injured, or harassed at any time. Work activities shall be avoided within 100 feet (30 meters) of active bird nests and 200 feet (60 meters) of active raptor nests until young birds have fledged and left the nest. Readily visible exclusion zones shall be established by a qualified biologist in areas where active nests must be avoided. Results of the pre-construction surveys shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, upon completion and prior to construction.	
<b>Substantial Adverse Effect on Special-Status Bat Species and Other Roosting Bats</b>		
<b>Impact 2.3-3</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the disturbance of habitats suitable to support special-status bat species, including pallid bat ( <i>Antrozous pallidus</i> ) and western mastiff bat ( <i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> ), as well as other roosting bats (Class Chiroptera). These species are protected by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).	<b>MM 2.3-3a</b> Wherever work is to occur within 100 feet (30 meters) of bridges or other artificial structures capable of supporting bat roosts, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall have a qualified biologist conduct pre-construction surveys (at least two at dawn and two at dusk) for bat roosts. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted at least 30 days prior to construction to determine whether bats are roosting in these structures. The biologist(s) conducting the pre-construction surveys will also identify the nature of the bat utilization of the bridge (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost). Results of the pre-construction surveys shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, upon completion and prior to work	<b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b> Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-3a</b> and <b>MM 2.3-3b</b> would reduce potential impacts to special-status and other roosting bat species in the project area by requiring pre-construction surveys and appropriate avoidance measures if determined present.

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	<p>commencing within 100-feet of existing structures that are capable of supporting bat roosts.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-3b</b> If roosting bats are identified during surveys conducted as a result of implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.3-3a</b>, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall implement the following measures during construction:</p> <p>a) Readily visible exclusion zones shall be established in areas where roosts must be avoided.</p> <p>b) If there is only night roosting by bats, work may proceed as normal, provided that no nighttime work is scheduled.</p> <p>c) If there is day roosting by bats (or night roosting and work during nighttime), qualified biologists shall monitor any construction activities within 100 feet (30 meters) for disturbance to bat roosting. If bat roosting behavior is determined to be adversely impacted by construction activities, construction must be avoided in the vicinity of bat roosts until either bats are no longer roosting or they have been excluded from roosting.</p> <p>d) If maternity roosts are detected, construction activities must be avoided within 100 feet (30 meters) of an active maternity roost until the end of the maternity roosting season, which typically occurs during the spring and summer months.</p>	
<b>Substantial Adverse Effect on Jurisdictional Areas, Riparian or Wetland Habitat</b>		
<b>Impact 2.3-4</b> Implementation of the proposed project would result in the	<b>MM 2.3-4a</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall retain a qualified	<b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b> Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-4a</b> through <b>2.3-4h</b> ,

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<p>disturbance of jurisdictional wetlands and/or riparian habitat areas, which are under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and/or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).</p>	<p>biological monitor(s) approved by all involved regulatory agencies to ensure compliance with avoidance and minimization measures within the project environmental documents. Monitoring will occur throughout the length of construction or as directed by the regulatory agencies. Full-time monitoring will occur during vegetation removal and erosion control installation. Monitoring may be reduced to part time once construction activities are under way and the potential for additional impacts is reduced. Monitoring reports shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, on a quarterly basis or as specified by specific mitigation measures.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4b</b> During construction, the biological monitor(s) will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible. When practicable, invasive exotic plants on the project site will be removed and properly disposed.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4c</b> Any construction activities across SLO Creek shall take place between June 15 and October 31 in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies, when the surface water is likely to be dry or at seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4d</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall clearly flag or fence project site will be so that the contractor is aware of the limits of allowable site access and disturbance. Areas within the designated project site that do not require regular access</p>	<p>combined with <b>MM 2.3-1a</b>, would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional riparian areas by requiring the following: preparation and implementation of the final HMMP; complying with all permit requirements specified by state and federal resource agencies; obtaining a biological monitor; preparing and implementing a construction management plan, SWPPP, and HAZMAT Response Plan; and restricting and managing construction activities. This would ensure that any direct loss of jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, or riparian habitat are mitigated and that indirect impacts to these features are minimized to a less than significant level.</p>

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	<p>will be clearly flagged as off-limit areas to avoid/discourage unnecessary damage to sensitive habitats or existing vegetation within the project site.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4e</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall prepare a Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) Response Plan to allow for a prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. Upon complement of the HAZMAT Response Plan it shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, to ensure compliance.</p> <p>All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur. During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Spill prevention and cleanup materials will be on site at all times during construction.</p> <p>The HAZMAT Response Plan shall allow the cleaning and refueling of equipment and vehicles occur only within a designated staging area, which shall be located at least 60 feet from wetlands, other waters, or other aquatic areas. This staging area will conform to best management practices (BMPs) applicable to attaining zero discharge of stormwater runoff. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles will be checked and maintained on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and to avoid potential leaks or spills.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4f</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall have a qualified arborist prepare a tree removal plan that</p>	

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	<p>minimizes the trimming and removal of trees to the extent feasible. Upon completion of the tree removal plan it shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, to ensure compliance. To avoid the potential for unnecessary removal or trimming of trees, any trees to be removed shall be marked with colored flagging or other suitable material. Trees to be trimmed shall be similarly marked but with a different color to differentiate them from trees to be removed. Unmarked trees shall not be removed or trimmed. After construction, any loss of riparian trees shall be replaced at a minimum 3:1 replacement ratio, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies. Methods for riparian vegetation replacement shall be incorporated into the final Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4g</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall prepare and incorporate into final construction documents an erosion control plan and stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) for the project. Provisions of these plans shall be implemented during and after construction as necessary to avoid and minimize erosion and stormwater pollution in and near the work area. The SWPPP shall include erosion control measures to be implemented during and after project implementation (refer to Appendix L of the NES including in <b>Technical Appendix T3</b>). Silt fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers (e.g., hay bales) will be installed between the project site and adjacent wetlands and other waters. No synthetic plastic mesh products shall be used in any erosion control materials. At a minimum, silt fencing will be checked and maintained on</p>	

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	<p>a daily basis throughout the construction period. The contractor shall also apply adequate dust control techniques, such as site watering, during construction. The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall ensure compliance with the SWPPP throughout the duration of the proposed project.</p> <p><b>MM 2.3-4h</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall prepare a construction management plan that identifies the rules and requirements of the job site. Upon completion of the construction management plan it shall be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, to ensure compliance. The construction management plan shall reference other applicable plans (i.e., SWPPP, HAZMAT Response Plan, employee training program, etc.), identify construction hours, contact names and numbers, and other specific management requirements, including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During construction, trash will be contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris will be removed from work areas. All vegetation removed from the construction site shall be taken to a certified landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. If soil from weedy areas (such as areas with poison hemlock or other invasive exotic plant species) must be removed off site, the top 6 inches containing the seed layer in areas with weedy species shall be disposed of at a certified landfill.</li> <li>• During construction, no pets will be</li> </ul>	

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	allowed on the construction site.	
<b>Substantial Adverse Effect on Critical Habitat</b>		
<b>Impact 2.3-5</b> Implementation of the proposed project may result in the disturbance of SLO Creek, which is considered critical habitat for south-central California coast steelhead.	No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure is necessary.	<b>Class III, Less than Significant</b> The impacts to riparian cover would be considered minor and would not substantially affect the ability of steelhead to spawn, rear young, migrate, or feed in SLO Creek. Therefore, the proposed project's affect on critical habitat for the south/central California coast steelhead ESU would be considered a less than significant impact. Furthermore, implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> , <b>MM 2.3-1d</b> , and <b>MM 2.3-4a</b> through <b>MM 2.3-4h</b> would require implementation of the final HMMP, which would include mitigation established by regulatory agencies (USACE, RWQCB, CDFW) for the SLO Creek corridor; that workers are made aware of potential special-status species in the area and that appropriate actions are taken upon discovery of a special-status species; and implementation of a series of relevant measures to protect of the steelhead and its critical habitat.
<b>Potentially Introduce Invasive/Exotic Species</b>		
<b>Impact 2.3-6</b> Implementation of the proposed project may result in the introduction of invasive or exotic plant species to an area, which could compete with existing sensitive native plant species, as well as nearby agricultural crops.	Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> and <b>MM 2.3-4b</b> .	<b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b> Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.3-1a</b> and <b>MM 2.3-4b</b> would reduce the potential to introduce invasive/exotic plants species by requiring revegetation/restoration to offset loss of riparian vegetation and the biological monitor(s) to ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible during construction, and when practicable, invasive exotic plants on the project site will be removed and properly disposed.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Cultural Resources – Environmental Setting**

The APE encompasses one archaeological site and two historic resources. The archaeological site, referred to as Locus 1 (CA-SLO 2592H), is located near Baron Canyon, consists of historic debris associated with a historic-period domestic occupation (FWARG 2013). The historic resources identified include the Octagon Barn, which is part of the Santa Fe Dairy/Home Dairy complex located near the proposed South Higuera Street trailhead, and the SLO Creek Bridge situated on South Higuera Street at San Luis Obispo Creek. These historic resources represent the agricultural heritage of San Luis Obispo County of the 1900s and early twentieth century transportation in the county, respectively.

Archaeological Resources

The Locus 1 site (CA-SLO-2592H) consists of structural foundation remains and associated non-native landscaping. The site includes portions of a rock and concrete wall, landscaping elements, including groundcover of vinca, and a light scatter of historic debris associated with homesteads (e.g., aqua glass, clear glass, and marine shell pieces) dating to 1895 and 1938.

Historical Resources

The Santa Fe Dairy/Home Dairy complex includes more than a half dozen buildings and structures built between the 1890s and 1938 (JRP Historical Consulting 2006). The focal point of the complex is a large octagonal barn (CA-SLO-1002H), built circa 1900, that appears to be eligible for listing under the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and for listing under the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 3. The Planning Commission approved a phased conditional use permit for the Octagon Barn Center in May 2012 (DRC20010-00053). That approval included restoration of the Octagon Barn and use as a 5,000-square-foot events center, as well as interior upgrades of the milking parlor and use as an agricultural museum, classroom, and community room. Other improvements associated with this approval include a new windmill, a new 1,000-square-foot storage structure with restrooms, outdoor multi-use area, and parking lot (112 parking spaces).

The SLO Creek Bridge is a concrete t-beam bridge constructed in 1928. The bridge was not eligible for the National Register in the Caltrans 1987 bridge inventory (FWARG 2013).

Bellevue/Santa Fe Schoolhouse, is located outside but adjacent to the project's APE at 6985 Ontario Road. The Bellevue/Santa Fe Schoolhouse was originally constructed in 1907. In 2005 it was renovated and remodeled to serve as a wine tasting room. The Schoolhouse currently is approximately 3,200 square feet with a commercial kitchen, two bathrooms, two tasting bars and an art gallery. There are outside patios and a front balcony. This building is not listed on California Register of Historical Resources or National Register of Historical Places.

## SUMMARY

### Cultural Resources – Environmental Setting

A Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) for the proposed project was prepared by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. (FWARG) in March 2012, which has been included in **Technical Appendix T4** of this DEIR. Below is a summary of the identified project impacts and mitigation measures. Standard mitigation measures from Appendix F of the PRE that are included in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** are summarized in Section S.2.2. For a more detailed historical overview of the area, please refer to Section 2.4, Cultural Resources.

### Cultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary

Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
<b>Disturb or Destroy Archaeological and/or Paleontological Resources</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.4-1</b> Implementation of the proposed project would involve construction activities that may result in the disturbance of known and unknown archaeological resources. Construction activities would occur in the vicinity of one known archaeological site and two known historical sites that may be eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) and/or as a California landmark.</p>	<p><b>MM 2.4-1a</b> Prior to commencement of construction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall establish an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) with a 20-foot buffer. The ESA shall encompass both potential homesteads associated with the Locus 1 (CA-SLO-2692H) site consistent with the <i>Historic Property Survey Report for the Bob Jones Pathway SLO to Ontario Road Project, San Luis Obispo County, California</i>, prepared by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. in July 2013 (on file at the County). The boundaries shall be fenced with highly visible orange-mesh fencing. The boundaries shall be delineated on the construction plans and signs posted in the field to deter any disturbance from construction activities. A qualified archaeologist shall be retained by the County General Services Agency to perform a construction worker training session prior to commencement of construction, to oversee placement of buffer fencing, and to perform periodic monitoring of the area to ensure the fencing remains in place and that the site has remained undisturbed. The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall monitor the ESA the duration</p>	<p><b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b></p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.4-1a</b> would ensure that the remains of Locus 1 remain undisturbed by establishing a fenced barrier around the site and requiring training and monitoring.</p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.4-1b</b> would ensure that proposed trailhead improvements near the Octagon Barn Center are consistent with the previously approved restoration project to ensure that the historical integrity of the Octagon Barn is retained.</p> <p>Implementation of mitigation measure <b>MM 2.4-1c</b> would reduce potential impacts to unknown archaeological, paleontological, and/or cultural resources discovered during construction by requiring that they are identified, properly evaluated, and appropriately mitigated s.</p>

Cultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
	<p>of construction of Segment 3.</p> <p><b>MM 2.4-1b</b> Prior to issuance of any permits for improvements at the Octagon Barn (Segment 1), the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall submit detailed final improvement plans for the proposed trailhead improvements at the Octagon Barn Center to the County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, for review and approval. The County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall review the final plans to ensure consistency with the approved phased conditional use permit for the Octagon Barn Center project (DRC20010-00053). Design-level improvement plans shall identify all proposed structures and equipment, as well as proposed materials, and show elevations in relationship to existing buildings/structures.</p> <p><b>MM 2.4-1c</b> If, during the course of constructing and implementing the proposed project, archaeological, paleontological, and cultural resources (i.e., prehistoric sites, historic sites, or isolated artifacts and features) are discovered, the contractor shall halt all ground disturbing activities immediately within 50 feet of the discovery, the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall be notified, and a professional archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards and Guidelines in archaeology and/or history shall be retained by San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency to determine the significance of the discovery.</p> <p>The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, and the County</p>	

**SUMMARY**

<b>Cultural Resources – Impact and Mitigation Summary</b>		
<b>Summary of Impacts</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Resulting Level of Significance/Findings</b>
	<p>General Services Agency shall consider mitigation recommendations presented by a professional archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications Standards and Guidelines in archaeology and/or history for any unanticipated discoveries. The County Department of Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, and the County General Services Agency shall consult and agree upon implementation of a measure(s) that they deem feasible and appropriate. Such measures may include avoidance, preservation in place, excavation, documentation, curation, data recovery, or other appropriate measures. The San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall be required to implement any mitigation necessary for the protection of archaeological, paleontological, and cultural resources.</p>	
<b>Potentially Discover Human Remains</b>		
<p><b>Impact 2.4-2</b> Implementation of the proposed project may potentially result in the discovery of human remains during ground-disturbing activities. However, compliance with the State of California Health and Safety Code requires notification requirements that are consistent with Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.</p>	<p>No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure is necessary.</p>	<p><b>Class III, Less than Significant</b></p> <p>State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 addresses discovery of human remains by requiring that no further disturbance of a discovery occurs until the county coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resource Code Section 5097.98. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), which will determine and notify a most likely descendant (MLD). No additional mitigation would be necessary beyond what is required by code.</p>

## LAND USE AND PLANNING PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Land Use and Planning – Environmental Setting**Local Setting

The project area is located within the Pismo Beach US Geological Survey (USGS) Quadrangle Map, primarily within the San Miguelito or the Laguna Land Grant. The project area falls within Townships 31 and 32 South and Range 12 East of the Mount Diablo base meridian.

The general character of the project area is agricultural with scattered residences. The adjacent hills, known as the Irish Hills, are a significant natural feature of this area. The majority of the proposed pathway would be separated from existing streets and parallel to Highway 101 and the San Luis Obispo Creek (SLO Creek) corridor. The pathway will be in a natural setting, with 50 percent of the route adjacent to orchards and fields. The topography is nearly level to gently sloping. Vegetation is varied and includes agricultural crops and orchards, ruderal vegetation, landscaping/ornamental vegetation, non-native annual grassland, serpentine bunchgrass, coastal scrub, coast live oak woodland, riparian (including riparian forest/scrub, freshwater marsh, and riverine habitats), and seasonal wetland.

Existing and Surrounding Land Uses

Bicyclists currently ride between the City of San Luis Obispo and the Ontario Road Staging Area via a Class II (on-street) bike path located on South Higuera Street and Ontario Road. The existing Class II corridor is used by commuting cyclists, as well as by recreational cyclists traveling to Avila Beach and as part of a longer-distance ride to the City of Pismo Beach or Five Cities locations. The existing Class II corridor places bicyclists immediately adjacent to motorists and includes a crossing at the Ontario Road/San Luis Bay Drive intersection. This intersection presents safety concerns and is less than optimal for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Concerns include the speed of traffic on San Luis Bay Drive, the number of queued motor vehicles on Ontario Road and on the Highway 101 off-ramp, and the number of vehicles turning onto Ontario Road or onto the Highway 101 on-ramp. All these factors affect bicycle safety and the overall ease of bicyclists getting to the Ontario Road Staging Area and/or to the City of Pismo Beach.

The project area contains several parcels and encompasses 148.78 acres. The project includes portions of the parcels identified in **Table 2.5-1**. These parcels lie with the rural portions of the San Luis Obispo and San Luis Bay planning areas. The areas within the San Luis Obispo planning area are subject to the San Luis Obispo Inland Area Plan and the San Luis Obispo Inland Land Use Map, and the areas within the San Luis Bay planning area are subject to the San Luis Bay Inland Area Plan and the San Luis Bay Inland Land Use Map. A small portion of the pathway near the Ontario Road Staging Area would be located within the boundaries of the Avila Beach Land Use Map. The majority of the project area is designated for agricultural land use and is within an agricultural zoning district. The surrounding land uses are primarily agriculture, as shown in **Figure 2.5-1**. Portions of the project area are within the following combining designations: AR (Airport Review), GS (Geologic Study), FH (Flood Hazard), and H (Historic).

## SUMMARY

### Land Use and Planning – Environmental Setting

Below is a summary of the identified project impacts and mitigation measures. Standard mitigation measures from Appendix F of the PRE that are included in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** are summarized in Section S.2.2. A more detailed analysis of aesthetics/visual resources is provided in Section 2.5, Land Use and Planning.

### Land Use and Planning – Impact and Mitigation Summary

Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
<b>Conflict with an Adopted Habitat Conservation Plan</b>		
As noted in Section 2.3, Biological and Natural Resources, there is no adopted habitat conservation plan (HCP) within the project area. The County is in the process of preparing an HCP for the northern and eastern portions of the county, but this habitat conservation plan would not include the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have <b>no impact</b> on the HCP.		
<b>Physically Divide an Established Community</b>		
Implementation of the proposed project will not physically divide an established community. In fact, the project will aid in connecting the City of San Luis Obispo to Avila Beach by providing a permanent multi-use pathway. Therefore, this would be considered a <b>Class IV, beneficial</b> , impact.		
<b>Conflict with Applicable Plans, Policies, or Regulations Adopted to Avoid or Mitigate Environmental Effects</b>		
<b>Impact 2.5-1</b> Implementation of the proposed project will result in development of a pathway that will cause disturbance of the physical environment, which may conflict with existing policies adopted to minimize impacts to the environment.	No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure is necessary.	<b>Class III, Less than Significant</b> Based on staff's analysis, the proposed project with implementation of mitigation measures provided herein would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Potential impacts to aesthetics/visual resources, agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, and traffic and circulation have been addressed through implementation of mitigation measures provided herein. In addition, the project applicant has proposed a series of voluntary measures and design features consistent with Appendix F of the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan.
<b>Potential Inability to Obtain Easements on Private Land</b>		
<b>Impact 2.5-2</b> Implementation of the proposed project will result in development of a pathway that will require obtaining easements on private property, some of which is in active agricultural production. The potential exists that the County may not be able to obtain all necessary easements to develop the preferred alignment.	No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure is necessary.	<b>Class III, Less than Significant</b> The acquisition of easements is an important implementation step for the project, but is not inherently an environmental issue under CEQA.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION PROJECT ANALYSIS

**Transportation and Circulation – Environmental Setting**

The proposed project is a portion of the City-to-Sea 8-mile pathway that will eventually join the communities of San Luis Obispo and Avila Beach. The linear project area is located adjacent to Highway 101, from the Octagon Barn trailhead on South Higuera Street to the existing Ontario Road staging area located near the Salisbury Winery, a distance of approximately 4.5 miles. The BJP includes a bike/pedestrian bridge over Highway 101 near the existing Ontario Road staging area. The primary roadways located in the area of potential effect (APE) include the following: South Higuera Street, Cloveridge Lane, Venado Lane, Monte Road, San Luis Bay Drive, Ontario Road, and US Highway 101.

Roadway Network

South Higuera Street – Is a two-lane major regional arterial roadway. Highway 101 on- and off-ramps are located along South Higuera Street. In 2010, South Higuera Street north of the SLO Creek Bridge had 6,800 average weekday daily trips (ADT), and 4,075 average weekend daily trips (Pinnacle 2010). The proposed project includes a Class I (separated) pathway along South Higuera Street; however, two at-grade crossings are also proposed (see Segment 1).

Cloveridge Lane - Is a two-lane, dead end, rural roadway that provides access to two private roads (an un-named private road and Venado Lane) that provide access to rural residences. The un-named private road provides access to one rural residence/farm and Venado Lane provides access to approximately six rural residences/farms located on Paseo de Vaca. No traffic data was available for this roadway at the time this EIR was prepared; however, the average daily trips (ADT) are anticipated to be minimal (less than 400). The proposed project includes 1,300 linear feet of Class III (shared use) pathway within the right-of-way of Cloveridge Lane, which would transition to a Class I (separated pathway) (see Segment 2).

Venado Lane Is a two-lane rural roadway that provides access to approximately six rural residences/farms located on Paseo de Vaca. No traffic data was available for this roadway at the time this EIR was prepared; however, the ADT are anticipated to be minimal (less than 250). This roadway would be used as temporary construction access for the proposed project (see Segment 2).

Monte Road - Is a two-lane rural roadway that provides access between San Luis Bay Drive and private roads on the east site of Highway 101. It dead ends at Baron Canyon Ranch Road. In 2010, the ADT for the Monte Road north of San Luis Bay Drive was 307 trips, with 29 trips during the AM peak hour (8:00 AM) and 37 trips during the PM peak hour (3:00 PM) (SLOPW, 2013b). The proposed project includes a 1,000 linear feet of Class III (shared) pathway along this roadway, which would transition to a Class I (separated) pathway 4,000 linear feet north of San Luis Bay Drive (see Segment 3).

San Luis Bay Drive - Is a two-lane major regional arterial roadway that provides access between Highway 101 and the community of Avila Beach, as well as rural residential development located on the eastern side of Highway 101. North and southbound Highway 101 on- and off-ramps are located at San Luis Bay Drive. In 2008, San Luis Bay Drive east of Highway 101 had 1,008 ADT, with 112 trips during

## SUMMARY

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### Transportation and Circulation – Environmental Setting

the AM peak hour (8:00 AM) and 90 trips during the PM peak hour (3:00 PM); and in 2010, San Luis Bay Drive west of Ontario Road had 7,460 ADT, with 540 trips during the AM peak hour (11:00 AM) and 806 trips during the PM peak hour (2:00 PM) (SLOPW, 2013a). The proposed project includes a Class I (separated) pathway along this roadway (see Segment 4).

Ontario Road – Is a two-lane arterial roadway that provides access between Highway 101 and private roads on the west side of Highway 101 as well as San Luis Bay Drive. Southbound Highway 101 on- and off-ramps are located along Ontario Road. In 2010, Ontario Road north of Avila Beach Drive had 1,620 ADT, with 194 trips during the AM peak hour (11:00AM) and 232 during the PM peak hour (5:00 PM); and Ontario Road north of San Luis Bay Drive had 1,049 ADT, with 107 trips during the AM peak hour (11:00AM) and 267 during the PM peak hour (5:00 PM) (SLOPW, 2010). The proposed project includes the existing Ontario Road staging area, which is located on Ontario Road near the Salisbury Winery (see Segment 5).

US Highway 101 - US 101 is four-lane principal arterial/extension of rural principal arterial roadway that provides interregional and sub-regional circulation in the county. The average annual daily trips (AADT) for the Highway 101 segment between Avila Beach Drive and the South Higuera Interchanges was estimated to be 69,500 (LOS D) in year 2008. The proposed project includes a Highway 101 overcrossing structure for pedestrian and bicycle uses (see Segment 5).

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Within the APE, existing bicycle facilities currently consist of Class II or III bike facilities along Ontario Road and South Higuera Street (striped lane for one-way bike travel on a street or highway or shared use with pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic). The existing Ontario Road staging area is located near the Salisbury Winery along Ontario Road. This staging area serves as an access point to the existing portion of the BJP that provides pedestrian and bicycle facilities to the community of Avila Beach. There are no other defined pedestrian facilities located within the APE.

### Public Transit

San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA) provides public transportation services to the project area, including regional fixed-route service and para-transit service. SLORTA is a JPA (Joint Powers Authority) in San Luis Obispo County that operates bus service connecting cities throughout San Luis Obispo County (and beyond), including Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo and more. SLORTA also oversees the administration of South County Area Transit (SCAT) which operates in the Five Cities area of Shell Beach, Pismo Beach, Grover Beach, Oceano and Arroyo Grande.

Fixed Route 10 travels through the APE. Fixed Route 10 travels between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria, with stops in Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande (Halcyon Park-and-Ride), and Nipomo. In addition, a free Avila Trolley provides seasonal service between the Pismo Beach Premium Outlets and Port San Luis via Avila Beach, Avila Valley (the Avila Barn, Bob Jones Bike Trail, Avila

**Transportation and Circulation – Environmental Setting**

Hot Springs Resort, and KOA campground), and resorts in the cities of Shell Beach and Pismo Beach.

Air Traffic

The project site is located more than two miles west of the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport. According to the Airport Land Use Plan, the APE is not located within the any of the approach zones for the airport (ALUC, 2005).

Below is a summary of the identified project impacts and mitigation measures. Standard mitigation measures from Appendix F of the PRE that are included in voluntary mitigation measure **VMM 1.1** are summarized in Section S.2.2. A more detailed analysis of aesthetics/visual resources is provided in Section 2.6, Transportation and Circulation.

Transportation and Circulation – Impact and Mitigation Summary		
Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures	Resulting Level of Significance/Findings
<b>Air Traffic Patterns</b>		
The project site is located more than 2 miles west of the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport. According to the Airport Land Use Plan, the APE is not located within any of the approach zones for the airport (ALUC 2005). The proposed project would construct a multipurpose pathway that is primarily at existing grade elevation. Since the APE is not located within the approach zones and no lighting is proposed, the proposed project would have no impact on air traffic patterns.		
<b>Conflict with a Applicable Plan, or Policy including the Congestion Management Plan</b>		
<b>Impact 2.6.1</b> Implementation of the proposed project will result in development of a pathway that is identified in the <i>2010 Regional Transportation Plan-Preliminary Sustainable Communities Strategy</i> and would support the use of alternative methods of transportation.	No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure is necessary.	<b>Class III, Less than Significant</b>  The proposed project would provide a missing link to allow and encourage non-motorized travel between the City of San Luis Obispo and community of Avila Beach, which would improve safety and the performance of the roadways network, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and would be consistent with plans and policies, including the <i>RTP-PSCS, Bikeway Plan 2010 Update, and General Plan Park and Recreation Element.</i>
<b>Hazardous Design Feature</b>		
<b>Impact 2.6.2</b> Implementation of the proposed project will result in development of a multi-use pathway that includes potentially hazardous design features such as at-grade midblock crossings, shared use	<b>MM 2.6.2-1</b> Prior to final design approval, the San Luis Obispo General Services Agency shall design the proposed project consistent with the requirements of the San Luis County 2011 Public Improvement Standards and Caltrans' Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices.	<b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b>  Implementation of mitigation measures <b>MM 2.6.2-1</b> and <b>MM 2.6.2-2</b> will eliminate potential conflicts with the San Luis County <i>2011 Public Improvement Standards</i> through an alternative design. Implementation of this measure would require realignment of the BJP

**SUMMARY**

<b>Transportation and Circulation – Environmental Setting</b>		
<p>with high-speed roadways, and a highway overcrossing with elevated ramps (Segment 5).</p>	<p>Where the attached path standards cannot be met, “Shared Lane” and/or “Bicycles May Use Full Lane” signs shall be posted in addition to or instead of the shared lane markings to inform motor vehicles that bicyclists might occupy the travel lane, pursuant to Section 9B.06 of the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Shared lane marking shall be placed immediately after an intersection and spaced at intervals not greater than 250 feet thereafter. The final design shall be subject to review and approval by the San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Works.</p> <p><b>MM 2.6.2-2</b> The proposed project shall be redesigned to eliminate at least one at-grade crossing of South Higuera Street. A single at-grade crossing of South Higuera Street to accommodate a connection to the City’s portion of the pathway would be acceptable if designed consistent with San Luis Obispo County’s <i>2011 Public Improvement Standards</i>. The final design of a single at-grade crossing of South Higuera Street shall be included in the design of the future Buckley Road extension, which will include a signalized intersection at South Higuera Street. An interim at-grade crossing of South Higuera Street may be acceptable prior to the construction of the signalized intersection under the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to final design approval, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall review and approve a design for a single interim at-grade crossing on South Higuera Street.</li> <li>• The location of this single interim at-grade crossing shall be coordinated with the City of San Luis Obispo and the San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Works.</li> <li>• The San Luis Obispo County Department of</li> </ul>	<p>similar to Alternative 3. The environmental impacts associated with this realignment are discussed in Section 3.0, Alternatives. The measure will also accommodate a single at-grade crossing concept to allow connection with the City of San Luis Obispo’s future connection to the BJP. As designs for this single at grade crossing concept can meet all applicable design standards.</p>

<b>Transportation and Circulation – Environmental Setting</b>		
	<p>Public Works shall ensure that the design of the at-grade crossing is consistent with the San Luis County <i>2011 Public Improvement Standards</i> and Caltrans' <i>Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices</i>. Necessary safety features may include, but are not limited to, the following design features as deemed appropriate to provide a safe crossing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of flashing lights, roadway striping, or changes in pavement texture.</li> <li>○ Signing for path users shall include a standard "STOP" sign and pavement marking, combined with other features such as bollards to slow bicyclists.</li> <li>○ For path users, directional signs and street names at crossings to help direct people to their destinations.</li> <li>○ For motorists, a sign reading "Path Xing" along with a path emblem or logo to both warn and promote use of the path itself.</li> <li>○ A median stripe on the path approach to organize and warn path users.</li> <li>○ Crosswalk striping in accordance with local and state preference, possibly accompanied by pavement treatments to help warn and slow motorists.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The interim at-grade crossing shall be abandoned with construction of the Buckley Road extension and relocated to the south side of the new Buckley Road/South Higuera Street signalized intersection..</li> </ul>	
<b>Emergency Access</b>		
<b>Impact 2.6.3</b> Implementation of the proposed project will result in development	<b>MM 2.6.3-1</b> Prior to final design approval, the General Services Agency shall ensure that the	<b>Class II, Significant but Mitigable</b> Implementation of the above mitigation measures shall ensure that

**SUMMARY**

<b>Transportation and Circulation – Environmental Setting</b>		
<p>of a pathway that will not impede an evacuation route; however, emergency access to the pathway may be limited.</p>	<p>project has been designed to provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathway landmarks or other location aids to allow an injured or ill party to convey location to emergency responders for party locating;</li> <li>• Provide emergency access for a 20-ton fire engine to remote areas of the pathway; and</li> <li>• Informational signs, gate control, and weather monitoring to avoid flood hazards during storm events.</li> </ul> <p>The environmental coordinator, or its designee, shall review the final improvement plans for consistency prior to commencing construction.</p>	<p>recommendations received from CALFIRE in response to the Notice of Preparation are incorporated into the project design, which would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.</p>
<b>Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities</b>		
<p>Impact 2.6.4 Implementation of the proposed project would result in the construction of bicycle and pedestrian improvements that are consistent with the <i>San Luis Obispo County General Plan, Bikeways Plan 2010 Update, and Regional Transportation Plan-Preliminary Sustainable Communities Strategy</i>.</p>	<p>No significant impact identified; therefore, no mitigation measure is necessary.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Class III, Less than Significant</b></p> <p>The proposed project has been planned in coordination with the San Luis Obispo General Plan Parks and Recreation Element (PRE), San Luis Obispo County Bikeways Plan 2010 Update, and Regional Transportation Plan-Preliminary Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-PSCS). Bicycle travel has become more vital to the circulation system as traffic congestion, recreation preferences, and concern for the environment have increased over the years. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities and this would be considered a Class III, less than significant, project impact.</p>

### S.3.2 SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS

#### AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

##### Cumulative Adverse Impacts to Visual Character

**Impact 2.1-3** Implementation of the proposed project, combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects may result in the degradation of the existing visual quality and/or character of the Highway 101 corridor between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach. This largely undeveloped area serves as a community separator, has moderately high visual sensitivity and quality, and high visibility. The proposed project's effect on the visual character of this area would be considered a **Class II, significant but mitigable**, cumulative impact.

The proposed overcrossing and two ramp structures proposed within Segment 5 would contribute to the cumulative and incremental degradation of the overall visual quality of the Highway 101 corridor between the Cities of San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach. Although there are no "similar" projects to the BJP, the introduction of new construction, infrastructure, and man-made features within the corridor represents a regional concern to the visual integrity of the corridor. Although the 300-foot overcrossing would not degrade the visual quality of the area to a degree that would be considered significant it would add another man-made structure to the Highway 101 corridor between the City of San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach. In addition, a 550-foot elevated approach ramp would be constructed on the eastern side of the overcrossing and a vertical retaining wall would be constructed adjacent to the approach ramp on the western side of the overcrossing. The elevated eastern approach ramp is located at a lower elevation and some distance from Highway 101, as shown in **Figure 2.1-3f**. While the western approach ramp is smaller than the eastern approach ramp, the structure would be located closer to the highway and would present to viewers traveling on Highway 101 as a solid vertical 200-foot-long wall, varying in height from 2 to 6 feet as shown in **Figure 2.1-3g**. According to the design team, the retaining wall adjacent to the western approach ramp will be textured to create shadow patterns and to avoid a broad expanse of uniform concrete.

The resulting improvements would be considered a potentially significant cumulative impact. Implementation of mitigation measures **MM 2.1-1a**, **MM 2.1-1b**, and **MM 2.1-2a** through **MM 2.1-2c** would reduce the proposed project's contribution to short- and long-term effects on visual quality by requiring re-vegetation and continued maintenance of the disturbed areas, establishing design standards for the proposed bridges; and requiring landscape screening of new structures. In addition to these measures, an innovative method to address cumulative visual impacts is to remove an equivalent amount of visual clutter from the Highway 101 corridor in the vicinity of the project area. According to the VIA, the increased impact generated by an overcrossing structure would be decreased or offset for the typical driver by a reduction in other visual clutter within 4 to 5 minutes of travel time along this corridor. The Land Conservancy currently has a billboard on their property that is a candidate for removal, assuming they are compensated for the lost revenue generated by the leasing of the billboard space. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce the project's cumulative impact.

##### Mitigation Measures

**MM 2.1-3a** The County of San Luis Obispo General Services Agency shall remove or cause to be removed one (1) standard-size billboard within the section of

## SUMMARY

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Highway 101 between San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach. The removal of a standard-size billboard shall be considered an equivalent offset for the proposed project's incremental contribution toward the degradation of the visual quality within the corridor. The billboard shall be removed prior to the start of construction of the overcrossing and associated ramp improvements.

### **MM 2.1-3b**

Prior to approval of final improvement plans, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall ensure that the southwest approach of the western ramp structure is located in such a way that minimizes impacts to existing trees (within approximately 5 feet of conceptual design alignment). New trees deemed compatible with the adjacent vegetation shall be added to supplement the screening of the approach ramp. The design shall be prepared by a qualified professional and plans shall be subject to review and approval by the Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, prior to start of construction. All plantings and revegetation shall be implemented concurrent with construction.

For land within the project footprint under Caltrans jurisdiction, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall select appropriate plant materials that will cover graded cut and fill slopes and that are compatible with adjacent vegetation to minimize visual impacts. Selected species shall be compatible with Caltrans requirements. Plans shall be submitted to Caltrans or its designee for review and approval prior to start of construction. All plantings and re-vegetation shall be implemented concurrent with construction.

The Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall be responsible for mitigation monitoring to ensure mitigation planting is installed and maintained for five years.

### **MM 2.1-3c**

Prior to approval of final improvement plans, the San Luis Obispo County General Services Agency shall identify a texture or pattern for the vertical retaining surface specifically designed to reduce the large plane of uniform vertical surface. In addition, appropriate landscape shrubs are to be planted between the retaining wall and the highway to provide screening. The design shall be subject to review and approval by the Environmental Coordinator or its designee for compliance prior to start of construction. Caltrans shall also be consulted where the project falls within its jurisdiction.

The Environmental Coordinator, or its designee, shall be responsible for mitigation monitoring to ensure mitigation planting is installed and maintained for five years.

### **MM 2.1-3d**

Prior to approval of final improvement plans, the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator shall ensure that all proposed design and landscaping requirements are incorporated into the final design drawings. Final design drawings and visual simulations from KVAs 5-3 and 5-4 shall be subject to review and recommendation by County of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Commission.

Implementation of mitigation measure **MM 2.1a** would remove existing man-made structures within the corridor offset the proposed project's new man-made structures. Implementation of

mitigation measures **MM 2.1-3b** and **MM 2.1-3c** would require retention of existing trees and special design and landscaping requirements at the approach ramps. These measures, combined with mitigation measure **MM 2.1-3d**, would reduce the proposed project's incremental contribution towards the degradation of the visual quality along the Highway 101 corridor. Therefore, the proposed project's affect on visual quality would not be considered cumulative considerable and this would be considered a **Class II, significant but mitigable**, cumulative impact.

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

### Cumulative Loss of Important Farmland and/or Forestland

**Impact 2.2-6** Implementation of the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative loss of important farmland (designated Prime or Unique Farmland) and/or forestland within the county. This is considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

Implementation of the proposed project would directly result in the loss of approximately 1.6 acres of land designated as important farmland; however, this conversion will result on in the loss of 0.5 acres of productive important farmland (designated Prime or Unique Farmland) and a maximum of 0.9 acre of forestland (riparian). When combined with other reasonably foreseeable similar projects within the County that convert farmland and forestland, the amount would not be considered cumulatively considerable in the context of countywide inventories of farmland and forestland. In addition, the County's policies severely limit the ability for cumulative conversion or for conflict to occur. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution towards the loss of improvement farmland and/or forestland would not be cumulative considerable and this would be considered **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

## BIOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES ANALYSIS

### Cumulative Affect on Avian Species and Other Nesting Birds

As impacts to nesting birds would be avoided and potential impacts to nesting habitat will be mitigated by implementation of the final Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, **no cumulative impact** to nesting birds is anticipated.

### Cumulative Affect on Special-Status Species and Their Habitat

**Impact 2.3-7** Implementation of the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative loss of one special-status tree species, California black walnut, that has limited statewide distribution, which would be a potentially significant cumulative impact. However, implementation of mitigation measures would reduce this impact to less than significant level; therefore, the proposed project affect on California black walnut combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects in the state would not be cumulatively considerable and would be considered a **Class II, significant but mitigable**, cumulative impact.

Historical land management practices in and adjacent to SLO Creek have resulted in a deterioration of habitat quality for steelhead and other aquatic organisms that inhabit the drainage. During recent years, restoration activities have been conducted along SLO Creek in an attempt to improve its water and habitat quality. Construction of the proposed project would result in the loss of some riparian vegetation, which may affect steelhead critical habitat as well

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as special-status species such as southern California black oak, steelhead, California red-legged frog, Coast Range newt, southwestern pond turtle, silvery legless lizard, and two-striped garter snake.

Considered in context with the historic loss of these species in California, cumulative effects to special-status species or habitat that supports these species could be considerable if not mitigated. Although the project impacts to southern California black walnut would be considered less than significant due to this species being common locally, any loss that would contribute to the limited statewide distribution of these species may be cumulatively considerable and a potentially significant cumulative impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure, combined with mitigation measures **MM 2.3-1a** through **MM 2.3-1f**, **MM 2.3-2a** and **MM 2.3-2b**, **MM 2.3-3a** and **2.3-3b**, and **MM 2.3-4a** through **MM 2.3-4h** would reduce the proposed project cumulative affect on special-status species to a less than significant level.

### Mitigation Measure

**MM 2.3-7** Prior to issuance of any permits, the San Luis Obispo County General Service Agency shall ensure that the final alignment of the Bob Jones Pathway avoids impacts to southern California black walnut trees to the extent practicable. If southern California black walnut trees cannot be avoided and must be removed or trimmed during construction, their loss shall be mitigated at a 4:1 restoration ratio for every walnut tree removed and at a 2:1 ratio for every walnut tree trimmed or otherwise impacted but not removed. If more than 25 percent of a walnut tree must be trimmed, it shall be mitigated at a 4:1 restoration ratio.

Implementation of the above mitigation measure provides compensatory mitigation to offset cumulative impacts to southern California black walnut. This mitigation measure, combined with mitigation measures **MM 2.3-1a** through **MM 2.3-1e**, **MM 2.3-2a** and **MM 2.3-2b**, **MM 2.3-3a** and **MM 2.3-3b**, and **MM 2.3-4a** through **MM 2.3-4h** would mitigate any potential effects to special-status species by requiring preparation of the final HMMP, which would include habitat restoration and enhancement along SLO Creek and ultimately provide a beneficial impact to the riparian corridor; requiring vegetation removal to occur outside the nesting season, if possible, and requiring pre-construction surveys when vegetation removal is proposed during nesting season; prohibiting construction activities within 100 feet of active bird nests and 200 feet of active raptor nests and requiring further consultation upon identification of active nesting birds; requiring pre-construction surveys to ensure the project does not jeopardize or result in the extinction of bat species; obtaining a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW; coordinating with SWRCB/RWQCB regarding the need for a Section 13263(a) general WDR; obtaining a biological monitor; preparing and implementing a construction management plan, SWPPP, and HAZMAT Response Plan; and restricting and managing construction activities to ensure any direct loss of jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, or riparian habitat is mitigated and that indirect impacts to these features are minimized. The proposed project's contribution towards cumulative affects on southern California black walnut species would be reduced to a less than significant level; therefore, the proposed project's contribution toward cumulative affects on this special status species would not be cumulatively considerable and this would be considered a **Class II**, *significant but mitigable*, cumulative impact.

## Cumulative Effect on Jurisdictional Areas and Riparian Habitat

**Impact 2.3-8** Implementation of the proposed project would contribute to the cumulative loss of riparian habitat or disturbance of SLO Creek, which is under the jurisdiction of the CDFW and/or the RWQCB. However, implementation of previously identified mitigation measures **MM 2.3-1a** and **MM 2.3-4a** through **MM 2.3-4h** would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional riparian areas to a less than significant level. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution towards the cumulative loss of riparian habitat would not be cumulative considerable and this would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

It has been estimated that California has lost approximately 90 percent of its historic wetland and riparian resources to alternative land use. Regulatory agencies have sought to offset the additional loss of riparian areas and wetlands with restoration and revegetation requirements for projects within their respective jurisdictions. The proposed project is anticipated to result in minimal cumulative impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and riparian areas within the SLO Creek watershed upon implementation of mitigation measure **MM 2.3-1a** and **MM 2.3-4a** through **MM 2.3-4h**. These mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional riparian areas by requiring the County to prepare and implement a final HMMP; obtain a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW; coordinate with the SWRCB/RWQCB regarding the need for a Section 13263(a) general WDR; obtain a biological monitor; prepare and implement a construction management plan, SWPPP, and HAZMAT Response Plan; and restrict and manage construction activities. This would ensure that any direct loss of jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and/or riparian habitat is mitigated and that indirect impacts to these features are minimized.

In addition, implementation of the *San Luis Obispo Creek Watershed Management Plan* (City of San Luis Obispo and County of San Luis Obispo 2003) also contributes to cumulative effects along SLO Creek, but with the goal of identifying management problems and management needs of the corridor, including restoration where needed. These effects, in connection with the proposed project and considered in a cumulative context, are not expected to threaten the SLO Creek riparian corridor. Restoration plantings as mitigation to offset the necessary temporary loss of riparian vegetation to create space for the new bridges will be consistent with the effort to improve and enhance the SLO Creek riparian corridor. Therefore, the proposed project's impact on jurisdiction waters and riparian habitat would not be cumulatively considerable. This impact would be considered **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

### Cumulative Impact to Cultural Resources

**Impact 2.4-3** Implementation of the proposed project may potentially discover unknown cultural resources and/or human remains during ground-disturbing activities. This is considered to be a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

Implementation of the proposed project, combined with other reasonably foreseeable projects, could result in the cumulative discovery and/or disturbance of cultural resources (i.e., historical, archaeological, and paleontological) and or human remains within the county. However, the impacts to cultural resources are addressed on a project-specific level. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a loss of cultural resources or disturbance of human remains that

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would be considered cumulatively considerable and this would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### LAND USE AND PLANNING CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

#### Cumulative Land Use Impacts

**Impact 2.5-3** Implementation of the proposed project, combined with other reasonably foreseeable development, would not result in conflict with plans, policies, or regulations that aim to mitigate environmental effects. This is considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

The proposed project will not combine with any other project to result in significant land use impacts. The primary land use issue in this case is consistency with adopted plans and policies. Incrementally, any and all urban development in the county—including the BJP—that is located near active agriculture has the potential to encroach on or otherwise impact agricultural operations. However, the Bob Jones Pathway is a unique project and not a typical “development” proposal. Several sections of the pathway will traverse along the margins of agricultural land, but the project’s contribution towards agricultural conflicts and conversion are not cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the proposed project’s cumulative affect would be a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

### TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS

#### Cumulative Traffic Impacts

**Impact 2.6.5** Implementation of the proposed project, when combined with other reasonably foreseeable development, would not exacerbate conflicts with transportation-related operations, plans, policies, or regulations. This is considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

The 2008 average AADT for Highway 101 in the vicinity of the project area is estimated to be 69,500 (LOS D), and the 2035 projected AADT is 74,082 (LOS E). From Avila Beach Drive to the City of San Luis Obispo, the highway is the most heavily traveled connection between the central and south portions of the county. Over the next 20 years, projected growth and land use intensification in the South County will continue to generate increased traffic and degrade LOS at the existing facilities. Increasing levels of commute traffic and summer traffic will affect the peak periods. Continued development of auxiliary lanes, improvement to alternative routes, and the implementation of closed circuit television monitoring are proposed to be used to enhance level of service into the future.

The proposed project would promote the use of alternative modes transportation and may have a net beneficial effect on long-term operations of the roadway network. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in traffic impacts that would be considered cumulatively considerable. Design features and emergency access impacts are site specific and will not combine with any other foreseeable projects to create a significant cumulative effect. This would be considered a **Class III, less than significant**, cumulative impact.

## S.4 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

CEQA requires that a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project be described and considered within an EIR. The alternatives considered should represent scenarios that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project, but will avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant environmental effects. The feasibility of an alternative may be determined based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries, and site accessibility and control (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(1)).

### PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS/ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT SELECTED

Alternative alignments for the proposed project were vetted through two feasibility studies, the *Planning and Preliminary Engineering Study of Bob Jones Trail Routes Phase II* prepared by the Morro Group and Questa Engineering Corporation in February 2002; and the *Bob Jones Pathway Phase II Feasibility Study* prepared by Alta Planning + Design and Questa Engineering Corporation in December 2003, which are included in **Technical Appendix T7** of this DEIR. Based on the feasibility studies, several preliminary design concepts of various segments or portions of segments of the preferred alignment were evaluated and determined infeasible for various reasons. The *Bob Jones Pathway Phase II Feasibility Study* ranked the preliminary design concepts on a scale of zero (low benefit or negative impact) to ten (high benefit or low negative impact) based on the following criteria: vehicle conflicts/safety; flood impacts; function/access; usage; cost; environmental impacts; private property impacts; right-of-way; and aesthetics. The preliminary design concepts are discussed in detail in Section 3.0, Alternatives.

### PROJECT ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN THIS EIR

This alternatives discussion identifies and examines a range of feasible alternatives that would avoid or reduce the severity of one or more significant environmental effects and/or address the public comments received during the scoping process. The alternatives analyzed include the following:

- Alternative 1 – No Project/No Development
- Alternative 2 – Important Farmland Avoidance
- Alternative 3 – Elimination of South Higuera Crossings
- Alternative 4 – Highway 101 Undercrossing at Ontario Road Staging Area
- Alternative 5 – Interim Improvements

**Alternative 1 – No Project.** Under Alternative 1, the proposed project would not be constructed. There would be no physical alteration of the environment, nor would the community receive the added benefit of a scenic Class I pathway between San Luis Obispo and Avila Beach. Cyclists would continue to have to share the roadway with vehicles. Use of the corridor would continue to be limited to more experienced cyclists. Use by pedestrians and users of all ages would be prohibited (or severely constrained) for safety reasons, which would not meet the objectives of the project. Alternative 1 is not consistent with the objectives for the proposed project.

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**Alternative 2 – Important Farmland Avoidance.** Alternative 2 would begin the same way as the proposed project, with Segment 1 crossing South Higuera Street near the Octagon Barn. However, instead of crossing back over the roadway, the pathway alignment would continue south along the western side of the roadway as a Class I pathway where feasible and as a Class II facility through the existing Highway 101 underpass near Ontario Road.

On the western side of Highway 101, the pathway would continue as a Class I pathway between Ontario Road and Highway 101 where terrain would allow. At the San Luis Bay Drive intersection/off-ramp, the intersection would be formalized and the Class I pathway would continue on the east side of Ontario Road, where feasible, to the existing Ontario Road Staging Area. The segment between San Luis Bay Drive and the Ontario Road staging area is similar to preliminary Design Concept A for Sub-Segment 5 as analyzed in the *Bob Jones Pathway Phase II Feasibility Study (Technical Appendix T7)*; however, that design concept had the pathway within the roadway right-of-way, not as a separated pathway. The feasibility study rejected the design concept for real and perceived safety, usage, and user enjoyment issues. This alternative would be a slightly different design than the preliminary design concept in that it would provide a separated pathway on the eastern side of the roadway, where feasible. This would require acquiring easements on private property.

**Alternative 3 – Elimination of South Higuera Crossings.** Alternative 3 would have the same alignment as the proposed project with the exception of Segment 1. Under Alternative 3, Segment 1 between the Octagon Barn and the South Higuera Street crossing of SLO Creek would be aligned so that the pathway would not cross South Higuera Street but would continue to run along South Higuera Street on the south/east side of the roadway. This alternative would avoid any safety concerns associated with the road crossing, while providing function and access. This alternative is similar to Design Concept B for Sub-Segment 1a analyzed in the *Bob Jones Pathway Phase II Feasibility Study (Technical Appendix T7)*.

**Alternative 4 – Highway 101 Undercrossing at Ontario Road Staging Area.** Alternative 4 would have the same alignment as the proposed project with the exception of Segment 5. Alternative 4 would align Segment 5 between San Luis Bay Drive and the Ontario Road Staging Area to cross Highway 101 under an existing bridge instead of constructing a new overcrossing structure and associated ramps. Within Segment 5, the pathway would extend south along a farm road within a Caltrans easement that is adjacent to the east side of Highway 101. At the Highway 101 Bridge (Bridge No. 49-0014R/L) at SLO Creek, the pathway would go under the highway and connect to the existing Ontario Road Staging Area. This alternative is similar to Design Concept B for Sub-segment 5 as analyzed in the *Bob Jones Pathway Phase II Feasibility Study (Technical Appendix T7)*.

**Alternative 5 – Interim Improvements.** Alternative 5 would retain the same Class II route but provide interim safety improvements (i.e., barricades, bollards, flashing lights), directional signage, and striping to better identify bike lanes and protect users until a more formal pathway can be constructed. Cyclists would continue to share the roadway with vehicles but with improved safety features. Use by pedestrians may continue to be prohibited in some areas for safety reasons, and thus Alternative 5 would not meet all of the stated objectives of the project. This alternative—or similar interim improvements—may also be implemented along various segments during the construction timeline or while easements are in the process of being obtained.

A detailed comparison analysis of the alternatives verses the proposed project is provided in Section 3.0, Alternatives.

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## ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) requires that the environmentally superior alternative be identified as part of this analysis. A summary of the alternative's potential physical affects on the environment on a segment by segment basis, as compared to the proposed project's impacts, is provided in **Table 3.0-1**.

Alternatives 1 and 5 would result very little if any improvements, which would result in lesser degree of impacts to most of the environmental resources when compared to the proposed project. However, these alternatives would not meet any of the stated project objectives.

Alternative 2 would provide primarily a Class II and III bicycle corridor that result in lesser degree of impacts to agricultural resources, biological resources, hydrology and water quality primarily within Segments 2 through 5; however, this alternative would also result in greater degree of impacts to aesthetics, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, recreation and parks and traffic safety than the proposed project. This alternative would not reduce the traffic safety impact identified for the proposed project nor would it meet most of the objectives for the proposed project.

Alternative 4 would provide an undercrossing of Highway 101 in Segment 5 instead of an overcrossing, which was identified to result in significant but mitigable impacts. This alternative would result in lesser degree of impacts to aesthetics; however, it would also result in greater degree of impacts to biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality and land use than the proposed project.

Alternative 3 would realign Segment 1 to eliminate the double at-grade crossing of South Higuera Street, which was identified as a significant but mitigable impact. Alternative 3 would result in lesser degree of impact to biological resources and reduce potential conflicts with the County's *Public Improvement Standards*; however, this alternative would result in greater degree of impact to important farmland than the proposed project. Implementation of the same mitigation measures for the proposed project would ensure that the increased conversion of important farmland results in a significant but mitigable cumulative impact.

When taking into account the impacts of the proposed project, as well as the weight and magnitude of the impacts, Alternative 3 represents the environmentally superior alternative. As determined from the analysis, it is the only alternative that would reduce the degree of impact on traffic safety while achieving the main objectives of the proposed project.

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