



NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- Who:** County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works
- What:** A Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and issued for the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works, Huasna Townsite Road Bridge Replacement Project. The purpose of this project is to provide a permanent concrete bridge to replace the temporary steel truss bridge installed after winter storms in January 2023 destroyed the original timber bridge. The proposed replacement structure will be an approximately 202-foot-long, 23.5-foot-wide, two-span, cast-in-place (CIP)/post-tensioned (PT) concrete box girder bridge located approximately 35 feet north of the existing roadway centerline, parallel to the temporary bridge. Traffic will be accommodated during construction with the existing temporary steel truss bridge. Construction activities would occur over a period of 9 months and are anticipated to begin in May of 2027. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure project impacts are less than significant. The project is located within the Huasna-Lopez Subarea of the South County Planning Area, Supervisorial District 4, approximately 11 miles east of the City of Arroyo Grande in a rural, unincorporated area of the county.
- Where:** Copies of the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and all the associated documents referenced in the Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for review at on the County's website at <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/public-works/forms-documents/environmental-determinations>, as well as at the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works, 976 Osos Street, County Government Center Room 206, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.
- Comments:** The 30-day review and comment period for the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration begins on February 22, 2025 and ends on March 24, 2025. Written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the review period and should be addressed to: William Fox, Environmental Specialist, wafox@co.slo.ca.us, County Government Center, Room 206, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.
- Public Hearing:** The County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing to consider the adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration. The hearing is tentatively scheduled sometime in 2026. Interested persons can access the Board of Supervisor's agenda at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/bos/BOSagenda.htm> to locate the date of the public hearing for this project.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Project Title & No. Huasna Townsite Road Bridge Replacement Project, 300678/ ED25-0275

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The proposed project could have a "Potentially Significant Impact" for environmental factors checked below. Please refer to the attached pages for discussion on mitigation measures or project revisions to either reduce these impacts to less than significant levels or require further study.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & Forestry Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology & Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use & Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities & Service Systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology & Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Population & Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the Environmental Division Manager finds that:

- The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>William Fox</u> Prepared by (Print) |  Signature | Environmental Specialist | <u>2/20/2020</u> Date |
| <u>Kate Shea</u> Reviewed by (Print) | <u>Kate Shea</u> Signature | Division Manager | <u>2/20/2020</u> Date |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Project Environmental Analysis

The County's environmental review process incorporates all of the requirements for completing the Initial Study as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study includes staff's on-site inspection of the project site and surroundings and a detailed review of the information in the file for the project. In addition, available background information is reviewed for each project. Relevant information regarding soil types and characteristics, geologic information, significant vegetation and/or wildlife resources, water availability, wastewater disposal services, existing land uses and surrounding land use categories and other information relevant to the environmental review process are evaluated for each project. Exhibit A includes the references used, as well as the agencies or groups that were contacted as a part of the Initial Study. The County Public Works Department uses the checklist to summarize the results of the research accomplished during the initial environmental review of the project.

Persons, agencies or organizations interested in obtaining more information regarding the environmental review process for a project should contact the County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department, 976 Osos Street, Rm. 206, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408-2040 or call (805) 781-5252.

A. Project

DESCRIPTION:

The County of San Luis Obispo (County) Public Works Department, with funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and oversight by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to replace the existing, temporary steel truss bridge on Huasna Townsite Road over Huasna River (RD-1071-BR1). The Huasna Townsite Road Bridge Replacement Project (project) is located on Huasna Townsite Road approximately eleven miles east of the City of Arroyo Grande. The purpose of this project is to provide a permanent concrete bridge to replace the temporary steel truss bridge installed after winter storms in January 2023 destroyed the original timber bridge.

The project footprint consists of an approximate 2.23-acre area and contains the right-of-way for the proposed project, all areas of ground disturbance, and potential staging areas. Staging is proposed on Huasna Townsite Road, within County right-of-way, and within adjacent fields that have been previously disturbed by grading and would not require improvements (e.g., grading, leveling).

The existing temporary steel truss bridge, approximately 180 feet long and 13.58 feet wide, will remain in place during construction to facilitate continued public access throughout the project. The proposed replacement structure will be an approximately 202-foot-long, 23.5-foot-wide, two-span, cast-in-place (CIP)/post-tensioned (PT) concrete box girder bridge located approximately 35 feet north of the existing roadway centerline, parallel to the temporary bridge. The proposed replacement structure would be designed to current design standards.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER(S): County right-of-way and APN 085-012-029 to northwest

Latitude: 35.086833

Longitude: -120.369549

Supervisorial District # 4

B. Existing Setting

Plan Area: South County

Sub: Huasna-Lopez

Comm: Rural

Land Use Category: Agriculture Residential Suburban

Combining Designation: Flood Hazard

Parcel Size: 2.23 acre

Topography: Nearly level to gently sloping

Vegetation: Rural, oak woodland, riparian

Existing Uses: Transportation

Surrounding Land Use Categories and Uses:

North: Agriculture; Residential Rural

East: Agriculture; residential

South: Agriculture; Residential Rural

West: Residential Rural

C. Environmental Analysis

The Initial Study Checklist provides detailed information about the environmental impacts of the proposed project and mitigation measures to lessen the impacts.

Initial Study - Environmental Checklist

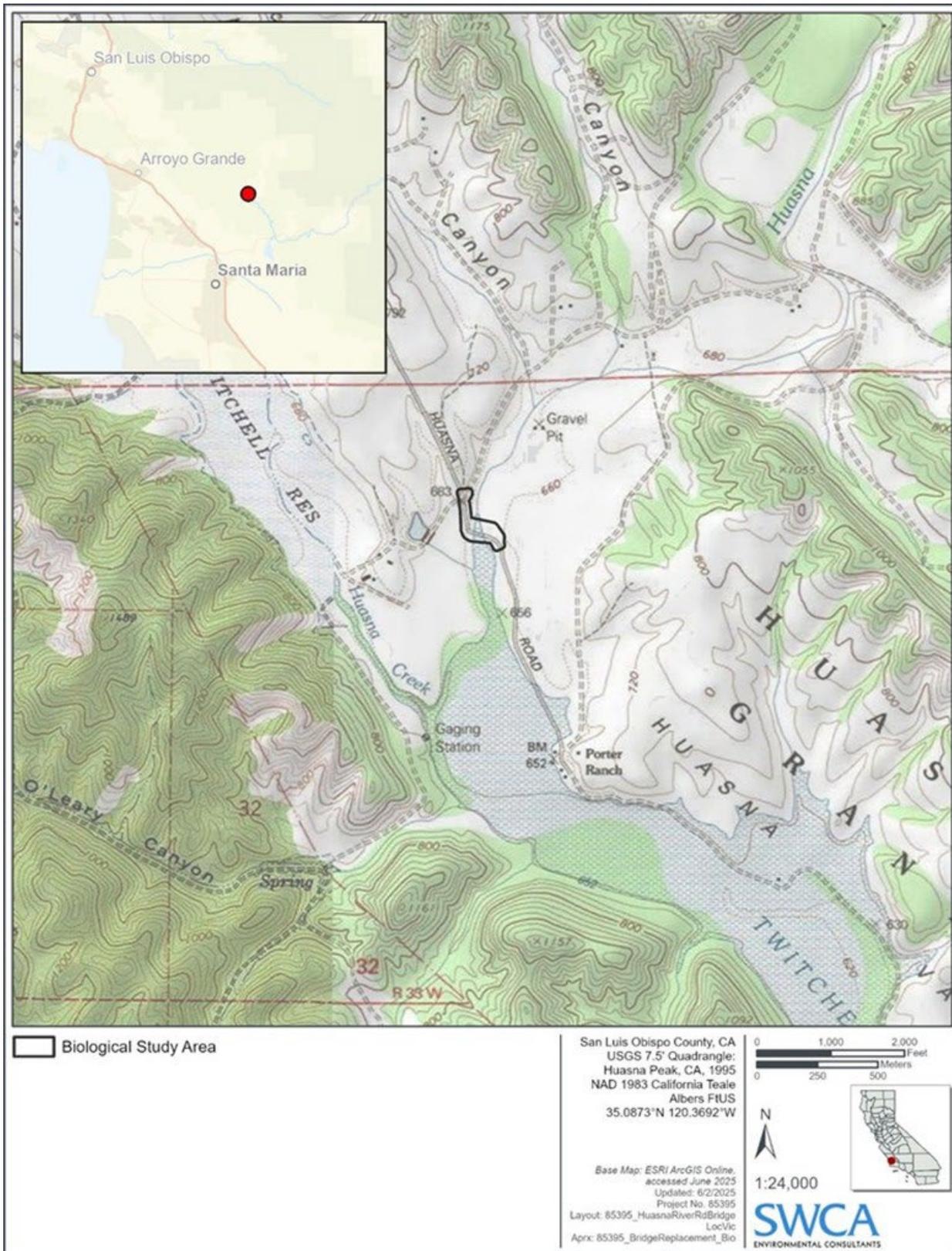


Figure 1 - Vicinity Map

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

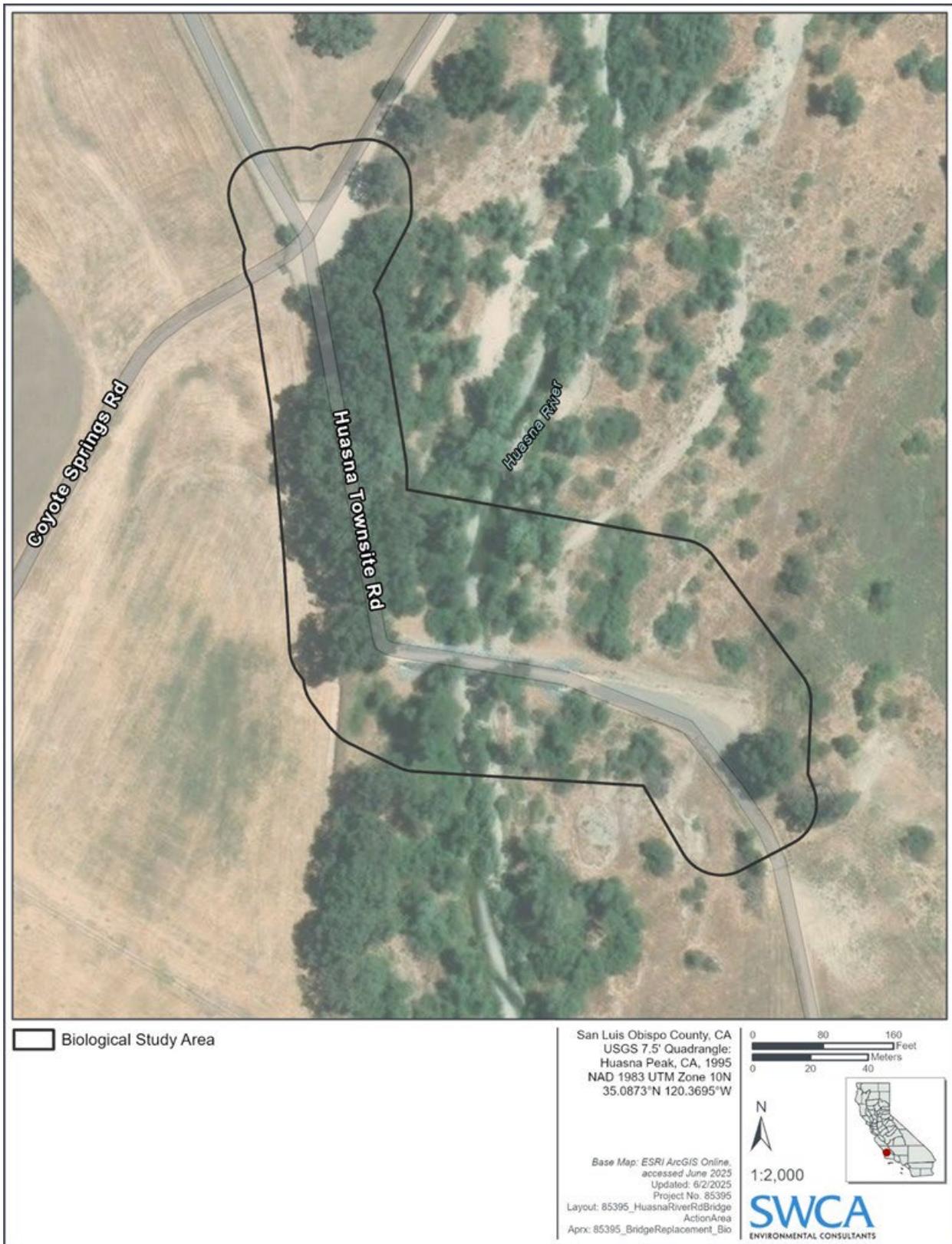


Figure 2 – Project Location – Aerial View

Initial Study - Environmental Checklist

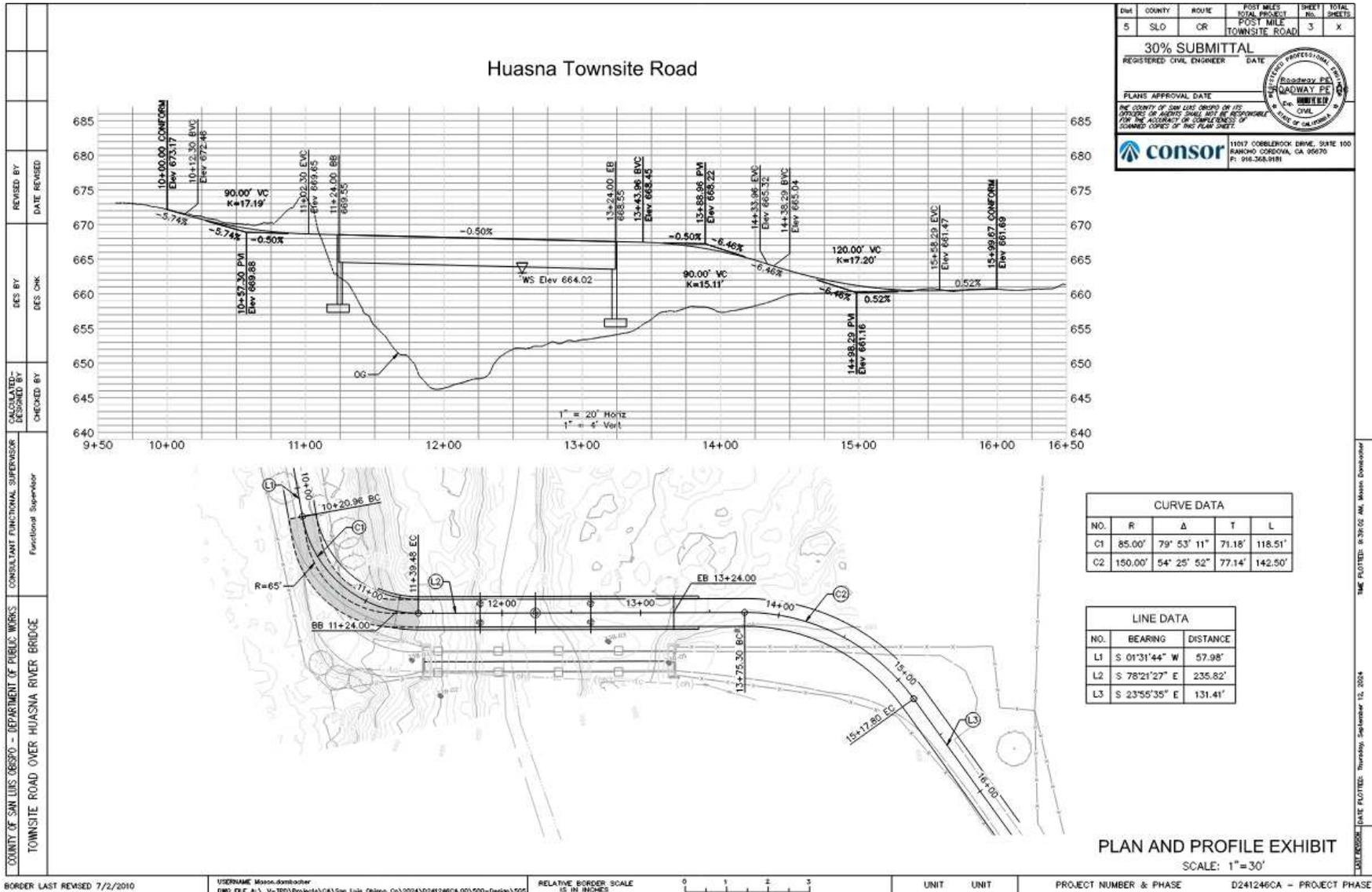


Figure 3 - Project Plan View

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist



(a) Aerial view looking over Existing Huasna Townsite Road Bridge (center of view).

Figure 5. Site Photographs

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist



(b) Existing Huasna Townsite Road Bridge looking west.



(c) Existing Huasna Townsite Road Bridge looking east.

Figure 5. Site Photographs (continued)

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

I. AESTHETICS

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

California Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program was created by the State Legislature in 1963 with the intention of protecting and enhancing the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. Scenic Highways within San Luis Obispo County include US 101, State Route 46 (SR 46), portions of State Route 41 (SR 41), State Route 1 (SR 1), and Lake Nacimiento Drive. The project site is located approximately 6 miles from SR 46 and 4 miles from SR 41, and is neither on or in close proximity to a designated scenic highway or sections of highway designated as eligible. (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2018).

County of San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance

The County of San Luis Obispo Land Use Ordinance (LUO) also defines a Sensitive Resource Area (SRA) combining designation that applies to areas having high environmental quality and special ecological or educational significance. The project is not located in an SRA combining designation.

Existing Conditions

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

The project is located in a rural residential and agricultural area eleven miles east of the City of Arroyo Grande. The project site is surrounded by rural residences, agriculture, and undeveloped land. The existing temporary bridge spans Huasna River, an intermittent stream/river with a sparse riparian canopy.

The proposed concrete bridge would be consistent with the current bridge aesthetics. The proposed bridge structure would be designed in accordance with applicable County, AASHTO, and Caltrans design guidelines and standards.

The project is not located on a designated scenic highway and is not within a designated scenic area.

Discussion

(a) *Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?*

A scenic vista is generally defined as a high-quality view displaying good aesthetic and compositional values that can be seen from public viewpoints and may be officially or informally designated by public agencies or other organizations. Vistas are inherently expansive views, usually from an open area or an elevated point. A substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista would occur if the project would significantly degrade the scenic landscape as viewed from public roads or other public areas. The project site is not designated as an SRA by the County's LUO and is not located in the view of a scenic vista. Therefore, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and no impacts would occur.

(b) *Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?*

The project is not located near a designated state scenic highway and would not damage scenic resources such as rock outcroppings or historic structures. Tree removals required for construction would be limited to localized effects within the footprint of grading for the new bridge foundations. The trees proposed to be removed for construction include valley oaks on the west side of Huasna Townsite Road. Where tree removals are proposed, there are other trees that will remain in place that will be visible from Huasna Townsite Road, so the project's tree removals are not expected to result in a significant impact on aesthetics.

(c) *In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?*

The project is in a rural area. As described above in (a), the project would not degrade the character or quality of public views from surrounding roads or from the bridge itself. Removing the existing temporary bridge for the project would not alter the scenic quality of the area. Tree removals required for construction would have negligible aesthetic effects, removing a small number of trees without appreciably altering the character of the views from surrounding roads, therefore impacts would be less than significant.

(d) *Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?*

The project does not include installation of lights or surfaces that would create glare and therefore would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area; therefore, no impacts would occur.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is not located within a scenic vista and is not within the viewshed of a designated scenic highway. Implementation of the project would not result in an adverse change in the existing visual character of the

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

project area or affect day or nighttime views. Therefore, potential impacts related to aesthetic resources would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p><i>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</i></p> | | | | |
| (a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

The project site is in the Huasna AG Preserve Area. Lands bordering and in the vicinity of the project site are mapped as agricultural land use. Active agricultural land uses border the project area on both sides of Huasna Townsite Road. There are lands currently under Williamson Act Contracts on all sides of the project site adjoining Huasna Townsite Road.

Mapped soil units in the project area include Salinas loam (0 to 2 percent slopes), Chamise channery loam (15 to 30 percent slopes), and Corducci and Typic Xerofluvents (0 to 5 percent slopes), occasionally flooded (NRCS 2025). The primary soil type within the project footprint is considered “river wash” and is not prime farmland.

“Forest land,” as defined at Public Resources Code Section 12220(g), is land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. No forest land is located in the project area.

“Timberland,” as defined at Public Resources Code Section 4526, or “timberland production zone,” as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g), mean areas which have been zoned pursuant to Section 51112 or 51113 that are used for growing and harvesting timber. No timberland is located in the project area.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation’s (CDOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California’s agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and current land use. According to the FMMP, the project site is located on land designated as “Grazing Land”. FMMP classifies “Other Land” as land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category is used only in California and was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen’s Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in mapping the extent of grazing activities. (CDOC 2020).

Williamson Act

The Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to execute contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agriculture or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value.

Discussion

- (a) *Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?*

Project impacts would primarily be in County right-of-way. Huasna Townsite Road and County right-of-way are included in areas mapped as agricultural land use and portions of the County right-of-way have a mapped soil unit that is a prime farmland soil. However, the existing road and right-of-way consists of ruderal land maintained as transportation infrastructure. These areas are not currently used for agricultural purposes and would not be suitable for agricultural use.

Designated farmland is present adjacent to County right-of-way and will be used for a temporary construction easement (TCE) on adjoining parcels. The proposed TCE area is currently used as an agricultural access road. The TCE would be restored to pre-existing conditions upon completion of construction and no permanent

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

impacts to existing farmland would result from the project. Therefore, the project would not convert farmland to non-agricultural use, and impacts would be less than significant.

(b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

The project would not conflict with existing zoning, would not affect access to or use of nearby agricultural lands and/or Williamson Act contract properties. The properties surrounding the bridge are currently in Williamson Act contracts, and the proposed permanent alignment would shift the bridge 35-feet north of the existing temporary bridge in County right-of-way. Although this action would result in the need for a permanent easement within parcels with Williamson Act contracts, this action would not result in a loss of farmland as these lands are within the immediate floodplain of Huasna River and not actively or historically farmed. In terms of operational impacts, the project would enhance use of Huasna Townsite Road bridge for agricultural equipment by widening the bridge. During construction the existing temporary bridge will remain open for use as a detour. The project is expected to enhance safety for agricultural vehicles, including those associated with Williamson Act contract parcels near the project site; therefore, less than significant impacts would occur.

(c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

There are no designated forest lands or timberland at or near the project site, and the project would not impact or conflict with forest land or timberland. Approximately two valley oak trees 40 inches DBH located in County right-of-way designated for removal to accommodate the new bridge are part of the vegetated areas bordering Huasna River but are not part of a managed natural area, including forest land or timberland; therefore, no impacts would occur.

(d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

The project site and surrounding area is not designated or zoned for forest land uses and does not meet the definition of forest land established in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g). Since the project site does not support forest land, the removal of a limited number of trees would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land; therefore, no impacts would occur.

(e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

The project would not involve other changes that could result in conversion of farmland or forest land to other uses. The project would enhance agricultural access in the vicinity, including existing agricultural land uses and Williamson Act contract parcels, by improving agricultural vehicle use and safety at the Huasna Townsite Road bridge. Therefore, the project would not result in the conversion of Farmland or forest land, and no impacts would occur.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project will not adversely affect agricultural uses, forest land, or timberlands. TCEs in agricultural fields on adjoining parcels will be restored to pre-existing conditions in accordance with the TCE terms developed with the affected landowners. Access to existing farmlands would not be affected as the temporary bridge will be left in place to accommodate traffic during construction. From an operational perspective, the project would improve safety for agricultural vehicles by widening the bridge. Therefore, the project would not result in significant impacts related to agriculture and no mitigation measures are required.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

III. AIR QUALITY

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

San Luis Obispo County is in non-attainment status for ozone and particulate matter 10 micrometers in size and smaller (PM₁₀) under the California standards. This means that the state air quality standards for ozone and PM₁₀ are not being met. The County’s Clean Air Plan describes strategies to reduce emissions of these pollutants with the goal of improving air quality to meet the state standards by the earliest possible date.

In regard to the federal standards, the eastern portion of the County is in non-attainment status for ozone, including the project site. The National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone, both primary and secondary, is 0.070 parts per million (ppm) averaged over 8 hours, this standard was established in 2015. The project area is currently classified as a “Marginal” non-attainment area which means it has a design value of 0.071 up to but not including 0.081 ppm.

The San Luis Obispo (SLO) Air Pollution Control District’s (APCD) Clean Air Plan (CAP) provides guidance for long-term emissions, cumulative effects, and countywide programs developed with the goal of reaching acceptable air quality levels. The CAP states that consistency analysis is generally required for large residential and commercial projects or industrial developments. Air quality improvement strategies in the Clean Air Plan that may potentially be applicable to Public Works projects are those aimed at reducing the use of fossil fuels and reducing vehicle travel.

For project-specific emissions analyses, the current guidance is the SLOAPCD CEQA Air Quality Handbook (2012) with administrative updates (2017, 2021/22 and 2023). The Handbook provides daily and quarterly air pollutant significance thresholds that apply to project operations and construction and specifies mitigation measures to address threshold exceedances. These include diesel idling restrictions for on-road and off-road construction vehicles and equipment, control measures for any grading activities that would generate

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

airborne dust or disturb naturally occurring asbestos, and control measures for disturbance of hydrocarbon-contaminated soils, demolition of asbestos-containing buildings and structures, and demolition of structures coated with lead-based paint.

Naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) is identified as a toxic air contaminant by the CARB. Serpentine and other ultramafic rocks are abundant throughout the state and may contain NOA. Serpentine bedrock is not present in the project area, and the project is not located within an area with known potential for NOA to occur.

Lead is a concern if sandblasting or heat gun removal techniques will be used to remove lead paint; these removal methods require a Lead Work Plan approved by APCD. The temporary bridge and road approaches do not contain lead-based paint.

SLOAPCD regulates demolition of asbestos-containing structures with greater than 1% asbestos content. The temporary bridge and road approaches do not have asbestos-containing material.

A referral was submitted to the SLOAPCD and the County received a response on November 5, 2024 for incorporation into future County bridge projects. SLOAPCD's recommendations are incorporated below.

Discussion

(a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

The source control measures in the Clean Air Plan are not directly applicable to the project. The project would not affect population growth or vehicle use such as by generating new traffic or increasing vehicle miles. Accordingly, the project does not conflict with the Clean Air Plan. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would be consistent with the air quality goals and objectives included in the County's CAP, and impacts related to consistency with applicable air quality plans would be less than significant.

(b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Construction activities could generate temporary increases in local air pollution and have the potential to increase ozone and PM₁₀ emissions. Construction equipment exhaust includes reactive organic gases (ROG) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) that are precursors of ozone. Construction-related sources of PM₁₀ emissions include diesel particulates and dust from demolition and ground-disturbing activities.

The proposed project's potential construction emissions were modeled using CalEEMod, Version 2022.1.1 (County 2026a) and are compared to applicable SLOAPCD thresholds in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of project emissions estimated in CalEEMod to APCD thresholds.

| Threshold Criteria | ROG and NO _x (combined) | Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM ₁₀) | Fugitive Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Project Daily Emissions ⁽¹⁾ | 78.10 lbs/day | 2.46 lbs/day | 2.69 lbs/day |
| Project Q1 Emissions ⁽¹⁾ | 1.18 tons | 0.04 tons | 0.04 tons |
| Project Q2 Emissions ⁽¹⁾ | 0.62 tons | 0.02 tons | 0.02 tons |
| SLO County APCD Daily Threshold | 137 lbs/day | 7 lbs/day | N/A |
| SLO County APCD Q1 Threshold | 2.5 tons | 0.13 tons | 2.5 tons |
| SLO County APCD Q2 Threshold | 6.3 tons | 0.32 tons | N/A |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

| Thresholds Exceeded? | No | No | No |
|----------------------|----|----|----|
|----------------------|----|----|----|

1. The project's potential construction emissions were modeled using CalEEMod, Version 2022.1.1.

As shown in Table 1, the CalEEMod emissions estimates for the project are substantially below the daily and quarterly SLOAPCD thresholds for criteria air pollutants.

No operational increases in emissions would result from the project because it would not increase traffic or vehicle miles traveled. Therefore, potential impacts would be less than significant.

(c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Sensitive receptor locations include schools, parks and playgrounds, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and residential dwelling units. The nearest sensitive receptors to the project site are residences located more than 3,000 feet from the area of disturbance. Construction activities should not expose sensitive receptors to construction-related pollutants.

Construction contractors must comply with state laws regarding diesel engine idling. These regulations apply to diesel-powered construction vehicles and equipment used for the project and would help minimize the potential for exposure to nearby sensitive receptors. The regulations include a five-minute idling restriction and the requirement to post signs in designated queuing areas and job sites to remind drivers and operators of the idling limit.

Construction activities may generate fugitive dust. Implementation of the SLOAPDC standard Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3 would ensure potential effects to sensitive receptors are reduced to less than significant.

Therefore, the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

(d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

The project would not result in any odors beyond those typically associated with construction projects. Those odors would be short-term and limited to the immediate construction area. This potential impact is less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not have operational effects on air emissions. The project would result in temporary construction-related air quality impacts, but the estimated maximum daily and quarterly construction emissions would be well below the SLOAPCD pollutant thresholds. Project construction would be subject to standard diesel idling restrictions codified in state law, and standard mitigation measures would be implemented to address the potential for adverse effects to sensitive receptors, including more stringent diesel idling measures, dust control measures (as provided in the SLOAPCD CEQA Handbook, SLOAPCD 2023) and incorporated herein as AQ-1 through AQ-3. Therefore, potential air quality impacts would be less than significant level with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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

Setting

A Biological Assessment (BA) and Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) were prepared for the project to address special-status species and natural communities within the project area (SWCA 2025a and SWCA

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

2025b). The BA and BRA describe vegetation communities, special-status species of plants and wildlife, migratory birds, and jurisdictional areas within the Biological Study Area (BSA), potentially impacted by the project. This information was supplemented with site visits and a literature review, including generating a list of special-status species within a 5-mile radius of the site in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB October 2025).

Habitat Types

The project site includes the following land covers: disturbed/developed/ruderal, agricultural lands, wild oats and annual brome grassland, arroyo willow thicket, and valley oak woodland. Huasna River flows through the project area, providing a vegetated creek channel habitat. Developed land includes the existing bridge and roads. Ruderal and disturbed lands generally border County right-of-way.

The creek channel in the project area is wide and gently sloping with a wide floodplain. Channel substrate consists of poorly sorted silt, sand, and gravel. The National Hydrography Dataset classifies Huasna River as intermittent. The project site may experience flash flow conditions during the winter months.

Arroyo willow thicket and valley oak woodland vegetation communities dominate the BSA. Within the BSA, valley oak woodland is mapped on the east side of Huasna Townsite Road in the riparian corridor of Huasna River north of the Huasna Townsite Road Bridge and in a small portion on the east side of the BSA. Riparian corridors provide important wildlife movement, shelter, and foraging habitat. The valley oak woodland in the western portion of the BSA is dominated in the tree canopy by valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) with occasional coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*). The shrub understory is dominated by poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) with some coffeeberry (*Frangula californica*). The understory in this community is variable and shifts from having a denser shrub canopy in the southern portion to a more herbaceous dominated understory in the northern portion. The herbaceous understory is dominated by nonnative grasses and forbs including ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), and poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). In some areas of this vegetation community, the herbaceous layer of the understory is dominated by a native forb, blue fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*). On the eastern side of the BSA, this vegetation community consists of valley oak trees with an herbaceous understory dominated by poison hemlock.

The tree canopy of the riparian area along Huasna River is dominated by arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), withred willow (*Salix laevigata*), Fremont's cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), and Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). The shrub layer is variable and includes a number of native shrubs including California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), poison oak, blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*). The herbaceous layer is dominated in most areas by yellow sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*) and ripgut brome. A common native perennial herb, mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*) is also found throughout this community.

Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grassland is prevalent in the eastern portion of the BSA. Vegetation in these areas is dominated by ripgut brome, redstem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), broadleaf filaree (*Erodium botrys*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*) and soft chess brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*). Scattered arroyo willows and elderberry shrubs are present at low densities. The northeastern portion of this community also contains patches of poison hemlock.

The developed/disturbed/ruderal land cover type includes the existing paved and gravel roads within the BSA: Huasna Townsite Road. This landcover type includes little to no vegetation and is characterized by bare ground or pavement. Where vegetation is present, it is limited to nonnative grasses and forbs in very low density including redstem filaree, broadleaf filaree, and black mustard.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Agricultural lands identified in the western and northern margins of the BSA are in fallow (not in current use for agricultural production) and represent a small portion of the BSA. Vegetation in these areas is composed of nonnative grasses including rigput brome and foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum*).

Special-Status Flora

Based on the literature review for this project, 39 special-status plant species have been documented in the nine queried USGS quadrangles in the vicinity of the project site. There is potentially suitable habitat present for nine of these special-status plant species within the project site.

One of these species, Gambel's watercress (*Nasturtium [Rorippa] gambelii*) is listed as federally endangered and state threatened. Even though suitable habitat is present, the BSA is well outside of its documented range. Although the BSA provides potentially suitable habitat for Gambel's watercress, it was not observed in the BSA during botanical surveys and the aquatic habitat present is considered poor because the flow in Huasna River is highly variable and generally swifter in comparison to the slow waters that are required by this plant species.

Of the other eight species, three species have a CNPS Rare Plant Rank (RPR) of 1B (Hoover's bent grass [*Agrostis hooveri*], Ojai fritillary [*Fritillaria ojaiensis*], San Luis Obispo County lupine [*Lupinus ludovicianus*]); one has a RPR of 2B (Aparejo grass [*Muhlenbergia utilis*]); and, four have a RPR of 4 (paniculate tarplant [*Deinandra paniculata*], Santa Barbara bedstraw [*Galium cliftonsmithii*], trumpet-throated gilia [*Gilia tenuiflora ssp. amplifaucalis*], and spring lessingia [*Lessingia tenuis*]). One of these species, trumpet-throated gilia was observed within the BSA during the April 2024 survey, within the arroyo willow thicket vegetation community east of Huasna River. This species was not observed again during surveys in 2025. No other special-status plant species were observed during surveys in 2024 or 2025.

Special-Status Fauna

Based on a CNDDDB query and a review of existing literature, 32 special-status animal species have been documented in the nine queried USGS quadrangles in the vicinity of the project site; with potentially suitable habitat for 17 of these species near the project site. These species are Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), Southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys pallida*), Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), Two-striped gartersnake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), White-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludoviciana*), Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*), Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), Western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*), Monterey dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma macrotis luciana*) and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*).

Direct and indirect impacts to special-status botanical and wildlife species may occur if they are present on-site at the time of construction.

Jurisdictional Areas and Permits

The aquatic feature within the project area is Huasna River. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction in freshwater systems are the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) or the landward limit of wetlands. The OHWM in Huasna River in the project area was delineated in accordance with the USACE Arid West procedures (SWCA 2025c). No federal wetlands (i.e., three-parameter wetlands) occur in the project area. Areas below OHWM are under the jurisdiction of the USACE as well as Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). The jurisdictional boundary for California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is the riparian bank, which was delineated as the landward dripline of the riparian vegetation community (SWCA 2025c).

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

- (a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

There is potential for adverse effects to the special-status species listed above from temporary and permanent project impacts. Construction impacts would be configured to avoid and minimize habitat impacts, and fencing would be used to prevent inadvertent construction impacts in adjacent areas.

One special-status plant species, the trumpet-throated gilia, an RPR 4 species, was observed within the BSA during the April 2024 survey, but it was not observed in 2025. This historical occurrence falls within the temporary disturbance area of the project. Additionally, construction activities could indirectly impact the species through the disruption of pollination and increase the spread of invasive species. Implementation of BIO-13 would require a preconstruction survey, seed collection if the population is present again, and replanting within the restored areas. BIO-25 would require that topsoil be collected to preserve any potential seed bank remaining in the area and that soil from weedy areas be hauled off-site. The number of trees in the project impact area that may require trimming or removal will be minimized to the extent feasible based on the final design plans and review of the proposed construction approach with the contractor. With implementation of BIO-24, the project will not result in a substantial adverse effect on native oak trees.

The BSA contains suitable habitat for Crotch bumble bee. Any nesting colonies within construction areas could be crushed, and the bees and larvae inside could be killed. Dust from construction activities could have indirect effects on pollination behavior. Measure BIO-15 would require preconstruction surveys for nests and the establishment of buffers if found.

The BSA provides suitable habitat for California red-legged frog and will result in temporary and permanent impacts to aquatic and upland habitat. Project construction activities, including vegetation clearing and grubbing and soil disturbance could result in the injury or mortality of California red-legged frogs (if present) within the riparian area of Huasna River. The potential need to capture and relocate California red-legged frogs could subject these animals to stresses that could result in adverse effects. Injury or mortality could occur through accidental crushing by worker foot traffic. Implementation of the temporary diversion/dewatering of Huasna River for construction could result in the injury or mortality of California red-legged frogs (if present in the immediate wetted channel). The dewatering and temporary fill of Huasna River could also result in the temporal loss of habitat through the decrease in algae, aquatic vegetation and macro invertebrate populations, which provide food for tadpoles and habitat structure and food for adults and metamorphs. Measure BIO-17 includes protection measures for California red-legged frogs.

The proposed project site provides marginally suitable habitat for southwestern pond turtle and two-striped gartersnake and provides suitable habitat for Northern California legless lizard and coast horned lizard. Construction activities pose risks for direct and indirect impacts to special-status reptiles, including, for example, vehicle and equipment strikes and harm during ground-disturbing activities. Implementation of preconstruction surveys and construction monitoring during dewatering (BIO-8) will reduce potential impacts to these species.

Direct impacts to avian species are most likely to occur if construction activities take place during the typical avian nesting season, generally February 1 through August 31. Construction-related activities can destroy nests, remove nesting habitat, or cause disturbance that may lead to nest failure or otherwise harass nesting, resident, or transient birds. Indirect impacts may occur due to habitat loss, such as through removal of

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

suitable nesting trees. With implementation of avoidance and minimization measures (BIO-19) the project will not result in a substantial adverse effect on special-status birds, nesting birds or raptors.

Impacts on roosting bats if present may occur during the removal of mature trees. Short-term construction activities in the vicinity of roosts may temporarily deter use of the areas by bats. Monterey dusky-footed woodrat and American badgers may be impacted directly or indirectly during construction, which poses several direct risks, such as vehicle strikes and destruction of resources, such as middens or dens. Further, construction may impact or deter use of habitat, yielding it unsuitable for these species. With implementation of avoidance and minimization measures BIO-21 through BIO-23, the project will not result in a substantial adverse effect on special-status mammals.

Impacts to individuals of special-status species would be avoided and minimized through implementation of appropriate pre-construction surveys and biological monitoring during construction. These include standard construction monitoring requirements for special-status wildlife that would be implemented by a qualified biologist. The special-status wildlife monitoring requirements ensure that a qualified biologist would be on-site and would be monitoring for other special-status species with potential to occur on site. Standard nesting bird surveys during the bird nesting season, generally February 1 through September 1, would address potential occurrence of special-status birds, including migratory birds, and would also document any unlikely evidence/occurrence of bat use of the area.

With incorporation of these standard species monitoring and habitat avoidance, restoration, and mitigation approaches detailed in Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-26, the project impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

(b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?*

The project would result in temporary construction impacts to approximately 0.67 acre of Developed/Disturbed/Ruderal, 0.28 acre of Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grassland, 0.17 acre of Valley Oak Woodland, and 0.63 acre of Arroyo Willow Thicket. The project would result in permanent construction impacts to approximately 0.16 acre Developed/Disturbed/Ruderal, 0.06 acre of Wild Oats and Annual Brome Grassland, 0.06 acre of Valley Oak Woodland, and 0.21 acre of Arroyo Willow Thicket. Temporary construction impacts would be restored to pre-existing conditions. Sensitive natural communities in the project area include the creek channel (areas below the OHWM), the riparian bank and valley oak riparian woodland habitat bordering Huasna River. The project has been designed to avoid and minimize temporary and permanent impacts to areas below the OHWM and in the riparian community bordering the creek, with a temporary impact on 0.18 acres and permanent impact of 0.01 acres below the OHWM. The project would have a temporary impact on 0.52 acres and permanent impact of 0.026 acres of riparian bank. Indirect impacts from construction activities would be avoided and minimized with implementation of standard best management practices, including environmentally sensitive area (ESA) fencing, sedimentation and erosion controls, and measures to prevent debris from falling into the channel during construction activities.

Temporary construction impacts to riparian bank and native oak trees will be minimized to the extent feasible. Permanent impacts to native oak woodland will be mitigated by planting replacement trees in accordance with the County's standard practice. Replacement trees would be located in County right-of-way in the project area or in similar settings in the general vicinity, with the goal of replacing the existing tree functions as close to the project area as feasible. With the inclusion of Mitigation Measures BIO-2, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-11, BIO-24 and BIO-26 the project impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- (c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*

There are no state or federally protected wetlands in the project area. The project would not have hydrologic effects in upstream or downstream areas that may support wetlands. Therefore, the project would have no impact on state or federally protected wetlands.

- (d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?*

Foundations consisting of CIDH piles will be placed on either side of the river for the new bridge abutments. Both abutments will be placed above the OHWM but within the existing riparian bank. The preferred two-span alternative also includes a single-column pier (3 × 5-foot oblong column supported on a 7-foot diameter pile) with a superstructure depth of 4 feet, east of the low-flow channel, but below the OHWM. These impacts would not substantially interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites. The project would not alter channel hydrology and therefore would not affect the condition of upstream or downstream nursery areas. Construction disturbance would interfere with use of the creek corridor by non-aquatic species on a temporary basis. Standard construction measures would limit the extent of the construction disturbance and restoration of temporarily disturbed areas would restore the pre-existing functions.

Nesting bird activity could occur in vegetation communities in the project area as construction is scheduled to occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through September 1). Impacts to nesting birds would be avoided by removing potentially suitable nesting vegetation ahead of construction and outside the bird nesting season if feasible, by conducting pre-construction surveys of vegetation communities in the vicinity during the appropriate nesting seasons, and using appropriate measures to avoid impacts to active nests during construction.

Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-5, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-8, BIO-19, BIO-20, BIO-23, and BIO-24 would reduce impacts to less than significant with mitigation.

- (e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*

The project would not conflict with any local policy or ordinance protecting biological resources such as oak woodland. Native oak trees that are removed for the project would be replaced in accordance with the County's standard practice. Mitigation Measure BIO-2 identifies avoidance and replanting requirements for trees impacted or removed within the project area. A pre-construction review of construction access and staging areas would be conducted with the contractor to minimize impacts to native oak trees to the maximum extent possible. With implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2, the project would result in less than significant impacts with mitigation.

- (f) *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

There are no Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) or other conservation plans directly applicable to the project. Therefore, the project would not conflict with any approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans, and no impacts would occur.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion/Mitigation

The two-span bridge design would require one pier foundation within Huasna River located outside of the low-flow channel but within the OHWM defining the boundary of the active channel, resulting in direct permanent impacts to the riparian bank for construction of the new bridge foundations. Temporary impacts will occur from removal of the existing temporary bridge foundations and construction access. The project has been designed to avoid and minimize temporary and permanent impacts to areas below the OHWM and in the riparian community bordering the creek, with a temporary impact on 0.18 acres and permanent impact of 0.01 acres below the OHWM. The project would have a temporary impact on 0.52 acres and permanent impact of 0.26 acres of riparian bank.

Standard mitigation measures would be implemented during construction to protect sensitive habitats, special-status species, and water quality. These include measures such as conducting surveys before and during construction by a qualified biologist; delineating environmentally sensitive areas beyond the approved project impact area as no-disturbance zones; implementing standard construction practices pertaining to sedimentation and erosion controls, equipment refueling and maintenance, spill response, trash management, and having a qualified biologist monitor construction activities to ensure compliance with all environmental measures. The project will also incorporate avoidance and minimization measures proposed through consultation with United States Fish and Wildlife (County 2025a).

Implementation of avoidance and minimization measures included as MM BIO-1 through BIO-26 would reduce potential adverse effects to biological resources to a less than significant level with mitigation.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Regional Conditions-Prehistoric

The project vicinity was traditionally occupied by the Obispeño Chumash. Chumash now refers to the entire linguistic and ethnic group of societies that occupied the coast between San Luis Obispo and northwestern Los Angeles County, including the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, and inland to the southern edge of the San

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Joaquin Valley. Neighboring groups included the Salinan, Southern Valley Yokuts and Tataviam on the north, and the Gabrielino (Tongva) to the east. Chumash place names in the project vicinity include Pismu (Pismo Beach), Tematatimi (along Los Berros Creek), and Tilhini (near San Luis Obispo) (Greenwood 1978:520). (SWCA 2025d).

Regional Conditions-Historic

As defined by CEQA, a historical resource includes:

1. A resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).
2. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant. The architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural records of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence.

Existing Conditions

The following inventories were examined for cultural resources: historic topographic maps and aerial photographs, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources, California Inventory of Historic Resources, California State Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, California Office of Historic Preservation Historic Property Directory and Determinations of Eligibility, and Native American Sacred Lands Files. A records search of the Central Coast Information Center (CCIC) was conducted on March 3, 2025. The records search covered a one-half mile radius around the project area and included archaeological and historical resources, locations and citations for previous cultural resources studies, as well as a review of the State Office of Historic Preservation's historic properties directory. The CCIC records search revealed four previous cultural resource studies with a 1/2-mile buffer of the project area. The CCIC records search revealed that three previously identified cultural resources are within a 0.25-mile radius of the APE, none of which overlap with the project area. No archaeological resources were identified within the APE as a result of the CCIC records search and literature review, the NAHC Sacred Lands File search, or intensive-level field survey. Furthermore, the APE has been subject to disturbance from road construction and weather events. As such, given the lack of known archaeological resources near the project, the APE is considered to have low sensitivity for the presence of buried and/or obscured resources.

No historical buildings, structures or sites listed in the California Register of Historical Resources are located in or near the project area. No historic properties or historical resources are present in the architectural APE.

An Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) (SWCA 2025d) was completed for the project. The cultural resource investigations included all areas of potential project effects. Cultural resource investigations in support of this project also included consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission regarding proximity of any designated sacred lands (March 3, 2025), outreach to Native American groups and/or individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area (June 23, 2025) under Assembly Bill 52 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), review of previously conducted studies in the vicinity, and a site-specific field survey.

County-coordinated Tribal consultation pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, did not lead to sensitivity or unknown resources being described in the project area, but the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) requested that a tribal cultural resource monitor be onsite during initial ground disturbing work. Through preparation of the ASR and 106 process, the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties recommended that

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

ground disturbing activities be monitored by a representative from their tribe (see Tribal Cultural Resources Section).

Discussion

(a) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?*

There are no historical resources listed in or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (which can include resources such as buildings, structures, districts, or sites) in the project impact area. Therefore, the project would have no impact on historical resources.

(b) *Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?*

Although the project would result in ground disturbance within a riparian area, based results of the ASR, there are no known resources and the project is not expected to cause an adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource. However, there is some potential for inadvertent discovery of unknown cultural resources if present within the work area during construction. The Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties responded to the outreach efforts and therefore an archaeologist and a tribal representative will be present during initial ground-disturbing activities (see Tribal Cultural Resources). Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-4 will be implemented to address monitor and tribal representative presence during initial ground disturbance, inadvertent discovery of previously unknown cultural resources and require that in the event an unknown cultural resource site is encountered, all work within the vicinity of the find must be halted until a qualified archaeologist evaluates the nature, integrity, and significance of the find. Based on implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-4, construction activities would not result in adverse impacts to known or unknown resources and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

(c) *Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?*

The ASR did not identify any previously discovered or evidence of human remains within the project area. Further, the project would be required to comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, which outlines the protocol for inadvertent discovery of human remains. California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 (CR-4). The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the coroner will notify the California NAHC, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the project site within 48 hours of notification and may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials. Based on required compliance with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, impacts related to disturbance of human remains would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

No archaeological or historical resources are known or expected to occur within or adjacent to the project site. In the event previously unanticipated resources are discovered during construction, implementation of CR-3 and CR-4 would reduce potential impacts to less than significant. As requested by the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties, initial ground disturbing activities would be monitored by an archaeologist and a tribal representative (see Tribal Cultural Resources). With the inclusion of Mitigation

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Measures CR-1 through CR-4, potential adverse impacts to cultural resources would be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

VI. ENERGY

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Energy considerations under CEQA are intended to evaluate projects with respect to the goals of decreasing energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels and increasing reliance on renewable energy sources (CEQA Guidelines Appendix F). Relevant factors for consideration can include energy consumption required for the project, compliance with energy standards, and effects of the project on local and regional energy supplies, electricity demand, and transportation energy requirements.

Local Energy Plans and Policies

The County's Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) establishes goals and policies that aim to reduce VMT, conserve water, increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, and reduce associated GHG emissions. The COSE provides the basis and direction for the development of the *County of San Luis Obispo EnergyWise Plan* (County EWP), which outlines in greater detail the County's strategy to reduce government and community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through a number of goals, measures, and actions, including energy efficiency and development and use of renewable energy resources.

The County Land Use Ordinance includes a Renewable Energy Overlay combining designation to encourage and support the development of local renewable energy resources, conserving energy resources and decreasing reliance on environmentally costly energy sources. The project site is located within the Renewable Energy Overlay combining designation.

This bridge replacement project was evaluated for impacts to energy. The replacement bridge does not require the installation or modification of an energy source.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

- (a) *Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?*

From an operational perspective, the project would not increase the capacity of the bridge or any regional roads. By including wider shoulders, the project would increase safety for pedestrian and bicycle travel over the bridge, which could encourage non-fossil-fuel based modes of local transportation that would reduce fossil fuel consumption.

Consideration of the project’s energy requirements and energy use efficiencies primarily pertain to construction-generated vehicle and equipment consumption. Construction vehicle emissions have been evaluated for the project as described in the Air Quality section and would be designed and managed to avoid wasteful or unnecessary consumption of fuel that would contribute to air emissions. Therefore, the project is not expected to contribute to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of fossil fuels, and thus impacts would be less than significant.

- (b) *Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?*

The COSE outlines measures to achieve the County’s energy efficiency goals. They pertain to sustainable energy supply, building efficiency and conservation practices, waste reduction, and increased use of renewable energy resources. These County goals are not directly relevant to the project.

However, as discussed in the Air Quality section, the County APCD Clean Air Plan includes approaches for controlling transportation-related air emissions including increasing opportunities and convenience for bicycling and walking as a means of reducing vehicle traffic. The project would improve safety for bicycling and pedestrian alternatives to vehicle transit for local travel consistent with the Clean Air Plan; therefore impacts would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is not expected to result in significant impacts to energy resources. The project is consistent with the goals in the Clean Air Plan to encourage increased bicycle and pedestrian transportation modes and may have a beneficial effect by reducing vehicle-related energy consumption. The Air Quality section addresses construction-related consumption of fossil fuels and recommends project-specific measures to avoid wasteful or unnecessary fuel consumption. Therefore, potential impacts related to energy would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

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

Setting

The entire County is mapped as a seismically active area based on the USGS Seismic Design Standards. The project site is not near the Alquist-Priolo Fault zone. The closest fault to the project site is over 1.6 miles away to the west in the Los Berros Canyon which separates Nipomo and Huasna Valley, and mapped as "Potentially Capable".

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Mapped soil units in the project area include Salinas loam (0 to 2 percent slopes), Chamise channery loam (15 to 30 percent slopes), and Corducci and Typic Xerofluvents (0 to 5 percent slopes), occasionally flooded (NRCS 2025). Results from geotechnical studies conducted by Yeh and Associates, Inc. are discussed below (Yeh 2023).

The project site is mapped as having high soil liquefaction risk and low landslide risk.

The project is within the Huasna Valley and the Coast Ranges geologic and geomorphic province. The province consists of north-northwest-trending sedimentary, volcanic, and igneous rocks extending from the Transverse ranges to the south and into northern California. The Coast Ranges province predominantly consists of Jurassic and Cretaceous age rock formations; however, the range is often flanked by Tertiary-age and Quaternary-age rocks that overlie older rock formations. Quaternary-age sediments are mapped within intervening drainages, valleys, and coastal areas (Yeh 2023).

Discussion

- (a) *Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:*
 - (a-i) *Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.*
 - (a-ii) *Strong seismic ground shaking?*
 - (a-iii) *Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?*
 - (a-iv) *Landslides?*

In regard to (a-i through a-iv), the project purpose is to ensure that the Huasna Townsite Road Bridge meets current design standards, including seismic-related potential for bridge failure and soil liquefaction, settlement, and landslides resulting from seismically produced ground shaking. This is part of the basic project purpose and is being informed by site-specific geotechnical data and a detailed engineering design that ensures conformance with State and Federal seismic design standards. Therefore, the project is not expected to have a risk of loss, injury, death or other adverse effects related to seismic hazards and impacts are expected to be less than significant.

- (b) *Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?*

The project would result in temporary ground disturbance which requires preparation of a water pollution control plan (WPCP). The plan will describe how sedimentation and erosion controls are to be used during construction to prevent adverse effects to adjacent resource areas.

The slopes bordering Huasna River will require proper application of erosion controls and may warrant more rigorous monitoring and maintenance compared to flatter sites. There are no other unique conditions or constraints that would require non-standard approaches to sedimentation and erosion controls. With incorporation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-11 the project would not result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil; therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- (c) *Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?*

See response in (a); the project will ensure that the bridge is stable under potential seismic risks, including liquefaction. Site-specific geotechnical information used in the project design will ensure the bridge is stable during seismic events. Based on project design and required compliance with applicable roadway design standards, the project would not result in risk related to potential ground-failure events; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- (d) *Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?*

The mapped soil units at the site have low erodibility and low shrink-swell potential. Therefore, the project would not create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property as a result of development on expansive soils and impacts would be less than significant.

- (e) *Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?*

The project does not include installation of new septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems and therefore will have no impacts.

- (f) *Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?*

The project would not significantly impact geologic units that have paleontological sensitivity. Based on the engineering drawings, the project would impact Santa Margarita Formation and alluvium at depth for CIDH pilings to support the new bridge foundations. This impact would not significantly impact paleontological resources or unique geologic features; therefore impacts would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would be designed to meet current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards, which have been developed to establish the minimum requirements necessary for road design to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare through structural strength, stability, access, and other standards. Compliance with AASHTO, Caltrans, and other applicable standards would ensure that risks to people and structures, including those related to seismic hazards and unstable soil conditions, have been properly safeguarded against. Therefore, potential impacts related to geological hazards are considered less than significant.

The project would not significantly disturb geological units with paleontological sensitivity. As proposed, project disturbance would not significantly impact any sensitive geologic units through CIDH piles for the new bridge foundations and removal of the existing poured concrete bridge abutments.

Standard construction measures would be implemented to control sedimentation and erosion, including Mitigation Measure BIO-1, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-11. These measures would reduce potential impacts from soil erosion to a less than significant level. Therefore, potential impacts related to geology and soils would be less than significant with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions are broadly recognized as contributing to an increase in the earth’s average surface temperature and long-term changes in climate. Potential GHG emissions associated with the project would be limited to burning fossil fuels from construction vehicles and equipment.

State Regulatory Setting

Assembly Bill (AB) 1279 (the California Climate Crisis Act) was signed into law in September 2022. This law established the revised GHG reduction goals, including the following:

- Achieve net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045;
- Maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter (following 2045); and
- Reduce statewide anthropogenic GHG to at least 85% below 1990 levels by 2045.

The 2008 Scoping Plan was first approved by the CARB on December 11, 2008, and is updated every 5 years. The most recent update released by the CARB is the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan), which was finalized and adopted in December 2022. The 2022 Scoping Plan lays out the strategies for achieving carbon neutrality and reducing anthropogenic (i.e., human caused) GHG emissions by 85% below 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by AB 1279 (CARB 2022).

The passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act (2006), recognized the need to reduce GHG emissions and set the GHG reduction goal for the State of California into law. The law codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. This is to be accomplished by reducing GHG emissions from significant sources via regulation, market mechanisms, and other actions.

Regional Regulatory Setting

In January 2021, the SLOAPCD released an interim Greenhouse Gas Guidance document. The interim guidance replaces previous thresholds of significance for GHG emissions that were based on a 2020 planning horizon. Current recommended options for CEQA consideration of GHG emissions include: (a) consistency with a qualified climate action plan; (b) no net increase; and (c) lead-agency-adopted defensible CEQA GHG

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

emissions thresholds. Generally, these approaches pertain to new commercial and residential development and vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which are not relevant for the project.

The CalEEMod construction emissions estimates described in the Air Quality section included greenhouse gases. As described in the SLOAPCD CEQA Air Quality Handbook (2023), daily and quarterly construction emissions were amortized over a 30-year life of the project to get yearly project contributions to greenhouse gases. Project emissions would be substantially lower than the SLOAPCD recommended threshold of 930 tons/year.

Discussion

- (a) *Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?*

As described in the Air Quality section, a project referral was submitted to the SLOAPCD and their comments were incorporated into the evaluations in the Air Quality Section. The project is consistent with the Climate Action Plan, and will not result in new operational emissions or an increase in vehicle miles traveled. The proposed construction approach would use the existing temporary steel truss bridge as a detour during construction. The project will generate greenhouse gas emissions throughout the duration of construction activities. With the inclusion of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3, project impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

- (b) *Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?*

Overall project consistency with the County EWP and the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) prepared by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) is evaluated below.

EnergyWise Plan Consistency

The County EWP includes numerous measures to reduce GHG emissions associated with energy use, motor vehicle use, water use, waste generation, and construction. It is important to note, however, that the County EWP is based on year 2020 GHG-reduction targets and has not yet been updated to reflect year 2030 GHG-reduction targets, per SB 32.

Proposed construction activities would require the use of energy in the form of diesel fuel and gasoline for worker and construction vehicles and equipment. Energy consumption would be limited to the temporary impacts of construction and would not represent a significant or wasteful demand on available energy resources. The proposed project would not include components which could increase energy consumption through operation. Therefore, construction and operation of the project would be consistent with goals and policies of the County's EWP.

2023 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

SLOCOG's 2023 RTP serves as the blueprint for regional land use and transportation development patterns. It includes visions, goals, and policies relevant to the proposed project. The project does not include development of retail, business, or commercial uses that would be open to the public; therefore, land use planning strategies, such as mixed-use development and planning compact communities, are generally not applicable. The proposed project would be limited to the operation of an existing roadway and associated bridge crossing and does not include components that could increase population or associated VMT within the region, which is consistent with the 2023 RTP goals and policies related to VMT.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Based on the analysis provided above, the project would be consistent with applicable state and local policies and programs intended to reduce GHG emissions, and potential impacts would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not generate operational emissions or increase VMT, either of which would contribute to GHG emissions. Construction emissions would be comparable to typical construction projects and for a temporary duration, and CalEEMod emissions estimates are well below the SLOAPCD annual greenhouse gas emissions threshold. With the inclusion of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3, project impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Hazardous Materials Sites

The Hazardous Waste and Substances Site (Cortese) List is a planning document used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements related to the disclosure of information about the location of hazardous materials release sites. The California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) maintains the EnviroStor database, which tracks DTSC cleanup, permitting, enforcement, and investigation efforts at hazardous waste facilities and sites with known contamination, such as federal superfund sites, state response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, school cleanup sites, school investigation sites, and military evaluation sites. The SWRCB maintains the GeoTracker database, which contains records for sites that impact, or have the potential to impact, water in California, such as Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites, Department of Defense sites, and Cleanup Program sites. The remaining data regarding facilities or sites identified as meeting the Cortese List requirements can be located on the CalEPA website: <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/>.

Review of the Envirostor and County databases (SWRCB 2025) for hazards and hazardous materials indicate that the closest mapped RWQCB cleanup sites and/or underground storage tanks are almost 7 miles west of the project site, in Nipomo.

As a result of the old bridge being destroyed in the 2023 storms, there are no materials onsite that could contain asbestos or lead-based paint.

The site is not in close proximity to ultramafic rock outcrops known to contain naturally occurring asbestos (NOA).

Emergency Response Plans

The County also has adopted general emergency plans for multiple potential natural disasters, including the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Emergency Operations Plan (County EOP), Earthquake Emergency Response Plan, Dam and Levee Failure Plan, Hazardous Materials Response Plan, County Recovery Plan, and Tsunami Response Plan.

Wildfire Hazards

The County Safety Element provides a Fire Hazard Zones Map that indicates unincorporated areas in the county within moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones (FHSZs). The project is within a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The project site is in a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

(CalFire) responsibility zone. The closest CalFire station is in Nipomo, located approximately 20 miles from the project site; the mapped response time is 30 to 40 minutes for Huasna Townsite Road.

Discussion

- (a) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?*

The project would require limited quantities of hazardous substances, including gasoline, diesel fuel, hydraulic fluid, solvents, oils, paints, etc. during construction, which have the potential to result in an accidental spill or release. Construction contractors would be required to comply with applicable federal and state environmental and workplace safety laws for the handling, transport, and storage of hazardous materials, including California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 22, Division 4.5. Operation of the project would not require the routine use of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials. Therefore, impacts associated with the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be less than significant.

- (b) *Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?*

Construction activities have the potential to introduce hazardous materials into the area in the form of fuel from construction vehicles and equipment. Potential for spills or releases would be prevented with standard best management practices regarding equipment and vehicle refueling and maintenance, and appropriate spill response preparedness.

The contractor would be responsible for determining appropriate handling and disposal for any potentially hazardous materials as a result of bridge abutment demolition.

With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-3 (Hazardous Materials Response Plan) and HZ-2 (Hazardous Materials Handling and Disposal), project impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

- (c) *Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?*

The project site is not within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The closest school is approximately 11 miles northwest of the project site on School Road in Arroyo Grande. The project is not expected to result in hazardous emissions and would not use any acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste and therefore no impacts would occur.

- (d) *Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?*

Based on a query of the DTSC EnviroStor and SWRCB GeoTracker databases, there are no previously recorded hazardous materials or LUST sites located within or adjacent to the project site (SWRCB 2025). Therefore, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment related to disturbance of a hazardous materials site and no impacts would occur.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- (e) *For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?*

The project is not in an airport review area or within two miles of a public use airport. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing and working in the project area, and no impacts would occur.

- (f) *Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The project site is not in an area subject to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The temporary bridge access will remain in place throughout construction with duration and status updates provided to affected landowners.

Construction is expected to take approximately nine months. The temporary bridge will remain in place and therefore construction would not impede emergency access. Construction notifications would be provided to fire departments, emergency responders, schools, transit companies, and local residents in accordance with the project Public Outreach Plan to ensure that project construction would not result in undue delays for emergency situations. Therefore, the project would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

- (g) *Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?*

As described in (f), the project would not require a detour and the project is being designed to comply with emergency vehicles. Construction notifications would be provided to local and state fire responders, both of which have responsibilities in the project vicinity.

Standard construction measures to avoid parking vehicles in areas of dry vegetation would be implemented to reduce the potential for igniting brush fires, as detailed in Mitigation Measure HZ-1, therefore project impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project's potential to have adverse effects due to the presence and/or handling of hazardous materials would be limited to construction-related fuel leaks and spills, for which the contractor would be required to develop and implement an appropriate hazardous materials spill containment and response plan, addressed in Mitigation Measure BIO-3 and HZ-2. Standard construction measures would be implemented to reduce risk of hazards from use of vehicles and equipment in dry vegetation, Mitigation Measure HZ-1. Construction notifications would be provided to all local entities that could be potentially adversely affected by the activity. This will minimize potential for safety risks due to emergency situations and is therefore included as a Mitigation Measure HZ-3. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-3 and HZ-1 through HZ-3 project impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials would be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (iv) Impede or redirect flood flows? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

Surface Waters. Surface waters at the site consist of Huasna River, intermittent stream. Huasna River flows into Twitchell Reservoir, approximately 5 miles downstream of the project site.

The closest U.S. Geological Survey stream gauge to the project site is on Huasna River approximately 0.6 mile downstream, near the intersection with Huasna Creek. Hydraulic modeling has been conducted to confirm that there will be no adverse impacts to the flood plain due to the project. The hydraulic evaluation also considered potential for scour from the new bridge foundations. The bridge foundations are designed to withstand the total anticipated scour values.

Huasna River is not listed as impaired surface waters on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of impaired and threatened waters (2024).

The existing bridge and adjacent road sections lack up-to-date stormwater features, which will be provided by the project.

Flood Hazard Zones. The project is located within a FEMA Zone A (approximate floodplain with no base floodplain elevations determined). BEN En Engineering Services created a 2-D HEC-RAS model of the proposed conditions. Approximately 50-ft upstream, the 100-year floodplain width is approximately 500-ft with a maximum depth of approximately 16.8-ft. Approximately 50-ft downstream, the 100-year floodplain width is approximately 500-ft with a maximum depth of approximately 16.8-ft. (BEN 2025)

Groundwater. The project site is the Huasna Valley Groundwater Basin. From the perspective of the State Division of Water Resources, the Huasna Valley Basin has been designated a very low-priority basin, and therefore is not subject to the requirement to develop a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Discussion

- (a) *Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?*

From the list of established water quality impairments in Huasna River, potential project-related effects would be limited to metals in stormwater runoff. Proposed AC overside drains would prevent direct runoff to the creek and provide pollutant removal via infiltration. This is expected to prevent the project from contributing to adverse water quality conditions in the creek. The project design would comply with the County's stormwater requirements, and construction activities would comply with the WPCP. As such, the project would improve stormwater treatment compared to existing conditions. Construction impacts on water quality would be controlled by use of standard BMPs to prevent erosion and transport of contaminants to the creek.

In regard to the other regional water quality issues of concern, the project would not generate sources of organic waste or use fertilizers that would impact nutrient and bacterial concentrations in the adjacent surface waters.

The construction stormwater plan will include spill response procedures for hazardous materials spills, and implementation of best management practices for equipment and vehicle fueling and maintenance to prevent inadvertent releases that could adversely impact surface waters and groundwater. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-11, the project is not expected to degrade groundwater quality and project impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- (b) *Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

The project would not rely on groundwater supplies, would not permanently alter surface flow conditions in the creek, and would not interfere with groundwater conditions or recharge. The project would generally be installed within the footprint of the original roadway alignment and would be limited to a marginal increase in impervious surface area at the project site. The marginal increase in impervious surface area would not interfere with groundwater recharge. The project does not include components that could impede recharge within Huasna River. In addition, the project does not require any connections to water and would not require any long-term operational water use. Therefore, the project would not decrease groundwater supply or interfere with groundwater recharge, and impacts would be less than significant.

- (c) *Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:*

- (c-i) *Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?*

Construction activities have the potential to cause erosion and sedimentation from disturbed areas. Appropriate sedimentation and erosion controls would be used to ensure there is no substantial erosion or siltation. Operational impacts would be reduced compared to current conditions by incorporation of stormwater controls designed to current standards. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-11, that address stormwater, erosion and siltation, impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

- (c-ii) *Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?*

Construction of the permanent bridge will increase flow capacity underneath the roadway. The marginal increase in impervious surface of the new bridge deck is not anticipated to substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- (c-iii) *Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?*

The project would replace an existing bridge and road approaches with a slightly realigned bridge and road approaches. The project is not expected to result in a material increase in the amount of impervious surface. As described in (a), appropriate stormwater management features would be incorporated into the project design to prevent direct discharges of stormwater runoff from the road into the adjacent surface waters and would be appropriately sized to accommodate anticipated runoff in a manner that would prevent an increase of polluted runoff.

Construction runoff would be managed and controlled with standard BMPs to prevent the discharge of pollutants from the site during construction, including appropriate erosion control devices, dust control measures, fuel storage and handling requirements, and measures to cover and contain stockpiled materials. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-11 impacts will be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

- (c-iv) *Impede or redirect flood flows?*

An estimated 2800 CY of fill is to be removed from the 100-year floodplain. An estimated 4000 CY of fill is to be placed in the floodplain. The fill is needed to raise the roadway profile, remove the existing abutments,

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

and provide stable slopes around the proposed bridge abutments. Re-grading to remove the existing abutments and provide stable contours around the proposed abutments would include fill below the base flood elevation. Hydraulic modeling has been conducted to confirm that there will be no adverse impacts to the floodplain due to the project. Therefore, project impacts will be less than significant.

(d) *In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?*

Temporary construction impacts for grading around the new bridge abutments would be stabilized prior to the rainy season. All construction-related equipment and debris would be removed upon completion of construction and prior to the rainy season to prevent any potential risk of pollution during high-flow events in the creek. The project is not located in a tsunami or seiche zone. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

(e) *Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?*

Compliance of the project with County stormwater requirements to ensure no adverse effects to water quality are described in (a). The project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or affect groundwater conditions and therefore would not conflict or obstruct management of the nearby groundwater resource, therefore no impacts are anticipated.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is in direct proximity to surface waters that support a variety of sensitive habitats (see Biological Resources section) and that have been impaired over time from a variety of stressors and surrounding land uses. The project is also in the 100-year floodplain with potential for significant effects on flood storage and flood water conveyance. Operational impacts of the project would be minimized by designing the project to maintain or improve the existing flood capacity and conveyance conditions at the bridge, and to treat stormwater runoff prior to discharge to adjacent surface waters. The potential for significant construction-related impacts would be mitigated with use of sedimentation and erosion controls as well as BMPs for good housekeeping, waste management and materials management to prevent hazardous materials or waste and debris from getting into the waterway. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-6, BIO-7, BIO-8, and BIO-11, HZ-1, and HZ-2, impacts related to hydrology and water quality would be less than significant with mitigation.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Physically divide an established community? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Surrounding land uses consist of agriculture, and undeveloped land. The project was reviewed for consistency with policy and/or regulatory documents relating to the environment and appropriate land use. Referrals were sent to outside agencies to review for policy consistencies (e.g., CalFire for Fire Code, APCD for Clean Air Plan).

The project is in the South County Planning Area – Huasna-Lopez Subarea Planning Area, which is addressed by the County Inland Area Plan. The South County Area Plan does not have specific policies for road or bridge projects. Standard Caltrans and County policies and BMPs would apply to the project. Mitigation Measures to ensure avoidance and minimization of impacts have been included in the project design to comply with the standards in the County General Plan and other applicable plans (e.g., the County Stormwater Management Program described in the Hydrology and Water Quality section). The project is not in the coastal zone and therefore would not require approval from the California Coastal Commission and/or the Local Coastal Program.

Discussion

(a) *Physically divide an established community?*

The project would not physically divide an established community and would not alter existing transportation routes between communities. The proposed construction approach would not require a temporary detour as the existing temporary bridge would be left in place during construction. The project would help maintain an emergency access travel way on Huasna Townsite Road, therefore impacts would be less than significant.

(b) *Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?*

The project is compatible with the surrounding uses and would improve the safety of the bridge for the benefit of travelers and local agricultural uses. The project was found to be consistent with the applicable plans (listed in Exhibit A). The project would not conflict with the plans or policies of any of the referral agencies. The project would be required to implement Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3, BIO-1 through BIO-26, HZ-1 through HZ-3, and CR-1 through CR-4 to mitigate potential impacts, which is consistent with the identified plans and policies intended to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental effects. Upon implementation of the identified mitigation, the project would not conflict with other local policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects; therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion/Mitigation

Implementation of the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. Upon implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ-1 through AQ-3, BIO-1 through BIO-26, HZ-1 through HZ-3, and CR-1 through CR-4, the project would be consistent with the identified plans and policies intended to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental effects. Therefore, impacts related to land use and planning would be less than significant with mitigation.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally- important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires that the State Geologist classify land into mineral resource zones (MRZ) according to the known or inferred mineral potential of the land (Public Resources Code Sections 2710–2796).

The three MRZs used in the SMARA classification-designation process in the San Luis Obispo-Santa Barbara Production-Consumption Region are defined below (California Geological Survey 2011a):

- **MRZ-1:** Areas where available geologic information indicates that little likelihood exists for the presence of significant mineral resources.
- **MRZ-2:** Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists. This zone shall be applied to known mineral deposits or where well-developed lines of reasoning, based upon economic-geologic principles and adequate data, demonstrate that the likelihood for occurrence of significant mineral deposits is high.
- **MRZ-3:** Areas containing known or inferred aggregate resources of undetermined significance. Based on the Mineral Land Classification Map prepared for the project area, the project site is located within the MRZ-3 designation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

There are active mines, including active or past sand and gravel pits, within one mile of the project site. The closest mine to project site is located approximately 0.4 mile to the northeast, in the Huasna River system (Huasna River Pit, County Mine No. 28).

Discussion

(a) *Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?*

Based on the Mineral Land Classification Map prepared for the project area, the project site is located within an area within the MRZ-3 designation (California Geological Survey 2011 a), indicating that minerals within the project area have an undetermined significance. The project site is located within rural road travel way that would not likely be designated or developed for mineral extraction. There are no known valuable mineral resources in the project area.

The project would impact primarily disturbed lands within the County right-of-way and is not located within or near any known mineral resources; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

(b) *Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?*

The project is not located within or near any delineated mineral resource recovery sites and would not affect access to any active recovery sites; therefore, no impacts would occur.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project impacts to mineral resources would be less than significant no mitigation measures are necessary.

XIII. NOISE

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project result in:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

As described in the Air Quality section, the project is not within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors including private residences. Huasna Townsite Rd is not a mapped roadway/SPRR or stationary source decibel (dB) area/road in the County's noise contour maps. The closest mapped noise source area is in Nipomo, over 7 miles away.

The project is not in the vicinity of an airport plan area or a private airfield.

Discussion

- (a) *Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?*

The County noise standards provide an exception for construction noise sources provided such activities are limited to Monday through Friday from seven a.m. through nine p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from eight a.m. to five p.m. While County projects are not bound by the standards, the County strives to maintain consistency and would require the contractor to follow them to the maximum extent possible. From an operational perspective, the project would replace an existing bridge and approach lanes in generally the same location and orientation and would not increase or alter existing use of the road, so is not expected to increase operational noise levels associated with the project area. The project would not generate a substantial increase in temporary or permanent ambient noise levels in excess of established standards; therefore, potential impacts would be less than significant.

- (b) *Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?*

Sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project site include residences, near the project site. The closest school (Branch Elementary) is approximately 11 miles north-west of the project site; the school is not expected to be affected by construction-related noise.

The project would generate temporary construction noise for the duration of construction, which is expected to be approximately 9 months. Construction noise would be temporary in nature and would normally be limited to daylight hours. There is potential on construction jobs of this nature for occasional tasks to extend into nighttime hours. The public would be notified in advance to the maximum extent feasible in the unlikely event that occasional night work would be necessary.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

The loudest anticipated construction activities are the excavator mounted hoe-rams (jack hammers) to break up the existing temporary bridge abutments. This activity would be for an expected duration of approximately 2 working days. Heavy construction equipment may generate intermittent ground-borne noise and vibration. Operation of the project does not include new features that could generate substantial ground-borne noise. Therefore, impacts related to exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or noise levels would be less than significant.

- (c) *For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?*

The project is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip or a public airport; therefore, the project would not expose project occupants to excessive airport-related noise, and no impacts would occur.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Construction-generated noise would be temporary and intermittent, would occur in a location where road-related noise is expected, and is not anticipated to be excessive. Private residences in the vicinity may experience adverse effects for intermittent, temporary durations during construction. Daylight construction and use of standard construction hours would be adhered to the extent feasible and construction activities would be coordinated with the adjoining landowners. Therefore, potential impacts related to noise would be less than significant, and mitigation measures are not necessary.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

The project site is located in a rural area of the County within the footprint of an existing road, Huasna Townsite Road, over Huasna River (riparian corridor). Land uses surrounding the project site are residential and agriculture.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

- (a) *Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?*

The project purpose is to improve the safety of the bridge. The project would not create new transportation networks or increase the capacity of Huasna Townsite Road. As such the project would not have any impact on regional population growth, and no impacts would occur.

- (b) *Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?*

The project site does not contain any existing residences and the project would not require the demolition of any existing residential structures. Therefore, the project would not displace existing people or housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere, and no impacts would occur.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not result in substantial or unplanned population growth and would not displace existing housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The project would have no impacts on population and housing and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fire protection? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Police protection? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Schools? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parks? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other public facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

Fire Protection Services

As described in Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the project is within a high Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The project site is in a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) responsibility zone. The closest CalFire station is in Nipomo located approximately 20 miles from the project site; the response time is 30 to 40 minutes for Huasna Townsite Road near the project site.

Law Enforcement Services

As an unincorporated area of San Luis Obispo County, the project area is under the police protection jurisdiction of the County Sheriff from the Oceano Station, which is located 20 miles away in Oceano (at 1681 Front St, Oceano, CA 93445), an approximate 40-minute drive from the project site.

Public Schools

The closest public schools are located approximately 11 miles northwest of the project site on School Road in the City of Arroyo Grande.

Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

The closest recreational facilities in the vicinity are passive recreational uses at Strother Park off Huasna Rd, approximately 14 miles northwest of the project site. This park provides open space for dog walking, ball games, and other recreational amenities.

Discussion

- (a) *Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?*

There would be no increase in population or traffic as a result of the project. The proposed project would replace an existing bridge and road without changing current function or capacity, so would not affect existing police, fire, schools or other public services. The project would not add new residents or businesses and therefore would not result in the need for expanded or new services or facilities.

Temporary construction impacts on fire and emergency response are discussed in Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. A temporary construction detour is not required and therefore the project would not impede emergency access or increase travel distances and response times. Construction notifications would be provided to fire departments, emergency responders, schools, transit companies, and local residents in accordance with standard County policies and in accordance with Mitigation Measure HZ-3.

Operational effects of the project on public services are expected to be positive by reducing the potential for catastrophic collapse of the bridge, which if it occurred, would create a public safety hazard. The new bridge would also improve public safety by providing increased bridge width which would more safely accommodate use of the bridge by large agriculture equipment.

Therefore, project impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is not expected to adversely affect public services and with implementation of MM HZ-3, impacts related to public services would be less than significant.

XVI. RECREATION

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

As described in Section XV, Public Services, the closest recreational areas and parks in the vicinity of the project are accessed from Huasna Road several miles northwest of the project site. There are no public facilities or access points for these or other recreational resource areas on or bordering the project area. Construction activities may result in temporary delays on Huasna Townsite Rd.

There are no established pedestrian or bicycle trails on Huasna Townsite Road.

Discussion

(a) *Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

The project would replace an existing bridge and would not result in increased use of or demand for nearby recreational facilities; therefore, no impacts would occur.

(b) *Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

The project does not include recreational facilities or require construction or expansion of recreational facilities; therefore, no impacts would occur.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would improve the safety of travelers already using Huasna Townsite Road on foot and bicycle. The project would not otherwise have an effect on existing recreational resources. Therefore, no impacts to recreation would occur, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Would the project:</i> | | | | |
| (a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Result in inadequate emergency access? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Setting

Senate Bill 743 and Vehicle Miles Traveled

Senate Bill 743, which was codified into the Public Resources Code section 21099, requires communities to achieve a 15% reduction in vehicle miles traveled. This resulted in a change in the CEQA Guidelines regarding the analysis of transportation impacts. As described in the December 2018 Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is considered the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project’s transportation impacts under CEQA, replacing level of service and other similar metrics for consideration of significant environmental effects.

Regional Transportation Planning

SLOCOG holds several key roles in transportation planning within the County. As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), SLOCOG is responsible for conducting a comprehensive, coordinated transportation program, preparing an RTP/SCS, allocating state funds for transportation projects, and administering and allocating transportation development act funds required by state statutes. The RTP, adopted June 7, 2023, is a long-term blueprint of San Luis Obispo County’s transportation system that identifies and analyzes the transportation needs of the region and creates a framework for project priorities. Huasna Townsite Road has not been identified for planned multimodal roadway improvements in the 2023 RTP.

Local Transportation Planning

The County’s Framework for Planning (Inland), Part I of the County LUCE, establishes goals and strategies to meet pedestrian circulation needs by providing usable and attractive sidewalks, pathways, and trails to

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

establish maximum access and connectivity between land use designations. The LUCE sets forth policies and programs to address transportation impacts.

Existing Conditions

The existing temporary single-span bridge is 180 feet long and 13.58 feet wide. The new bridge would be a 202-foot-long, 23.5 feet wide structure to replace the destroyed bridge. There are no established pedestrian or bicycle trails on Huasna Townsite Road.

Discussion

- (a) *Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*

The project does not conflict with any program plans, ordinances, or policies addressing transportation facilities, including the County's South County Area Plan Circulation Element.

In regard to VMT, the proposed bridge replacement is not expected to affect VMT because it is designed to improve the safety of the bridge, not add or remove capacity. Replacement of bridges is listed in Section F of the December 2018 Technical Advisory as one of the transportation project types that would not likely lead to a substantial or measurable increase in VMT, and therefore should not require an induced traffic analysis. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- (b) *Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?*

Section 15064.3(b) of the CEQA Guidelines states that transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, vehicle miles traveled should be presumed to cause a less than significant impact on transportation. The proposed project would not permanently change transportation routes or the capacity of the existing road and would not have any permanent effect on vehicle miles traveled or traffic volumes. Therefore, the project would be consistent with Section 15064.3(b) and impacts would be less than significant.

- (c) *Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?*

The project would not introduce new traffic uses. The project would incrementally reduce hazards by providing increased width to accommodate agricultural equipment use of the bridge. The proposed bridge would be required to comply with relevant Caltrans and County Public Works requirements to avoid hazardous roadway design features. Based on required compliance with Caltrans and County Public Works Department requirements, the project would not result in hazards due to proposed roadway design features; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- (d) *Result in inadequate emergency access?*

The new bridge would not alter emergency access. Emergency access would be accommodated at all times during construction by the existing temporary bridge; notifications would ensure emergency responders and local residents are aware of the location, status, and schedule; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project does not conflict with any program plans, ordinances, or policies addressing transportation facilities, including the County's South County Area Plan Circulation Element. The project would not generate vehicle trips that would exceed existing VMT thresholds. In addition, the project would be consistent with

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Caltrans and County Public Works Department design standards to avoid hazardous roadway design. Therefore, impacts related to transportation would be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

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

Setting

Approved in 2014, AB 52 added tribal cultural resources to the categories of resources that must be evaluated under CEQA. Tribal cultural resources are defined as either of the following:

1. Sites, features, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:
 - a. Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR; or

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- b. Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k).
2. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in Public Resources Code Section 5024.1.

The Cultural Resources section describes the cultural resources setting for the project site. Although there are no known historical or archaeological resources in the project area; areas along Huasna River may be sensitive to California Native American tribes. County-coordinated Tribal consultation pursuant to Assembly Bill 52, did not lead to sensitivity or unknown resources being described in the project area, but the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) requested that a tribal cultural resource monitor be onsite during initial ground disturbing work. Through preparation of the ASR and 106 process, the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties also recommended that ground disturbing activities be monitored by a representative from their tribe.

Discussion

- (a) *Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:*
 - (a-i) *Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k)?*
 - (a-ii) *A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.*

Pursuant to AB 52, the County provided notice to local California native tribes with geographic and/or cultural ties to the project region. Tribal consultation resulted in information being conveyed to the County about the archaeological sensitivity of the region and the request that excavation activities be monitored by a representative of Northern Chumash Tribal Council and the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. The presence of an onsite archaeological monitor and tribal monitoring during initial ground disturbance have been incorporated into Mitigation Measure CR-1 and CR-2.

Based on the results of the ASR, there are no known cultural or tribal cultural archaeological resources within the project area (SWCA 2025d). Mitigation Measures CR-3 and 4 have been identified to address inadvertent discovery of previously unknown cultural resources and require that in the event an unknown cultural resource site is encountered, all work within the vicinity of the find must be halted until a qualified archaeologist is retained to evaluate the nature, integrity, and significance of the find. In addition, the project would be required to comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, which identifies the proper protocol in the event of inadvertent discovery of human remains, including the cessation of work within the vicinity of the discovery, identification of human remains by a qualified coroner, and if the remains are identified to be of Native American descent, contact with the NAHC. Based on required compliance with the County LUO and California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, the project is not anticipated to result in adverse impacts to known or unknown cultural archaeological resources; therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion/Mitigation

No tribal cultural resources are known or expected to occur within or adjacent to the project site. In the event unanticipated sensitive resources are discovered during project activities, implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-3 and adherence with California Health and Safety Code procedures would reduce potential impacts to less than significant; therefore, potential impacts to tribal cultural resources would be less than significant. In consideration of the request of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council and Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties, initial ground disturbing activities will be monitored by an archaeologist and a tribal representative(s). With the inclusion of the Mitigation Measures CR-1 through CR-4, potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources would be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

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

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

Stormwater

Per the County's Stormwater Program, the County Public Works Department is responsible for ensuring that new construction sites implement BMPs during construction and evaluate potential stormwater impacts post-construction.

Underground and Overhead Utilities

There are no underground utilities in the project area. There is an AT&T overhead utility line that runs parallel to the existing temporary bridge that will remain and be protected in place.

Water/Wastewater Facilities

There are no water or wastewater facilities in or near the project area.

Solid Waste Facilities

There are three landfills in San Luis Obispo County: Cold Canyon Landfill, located south of the city of San Luis Obispo; Chicago Grade Landfill, located near the community of Templeton; and Paso Robles Landfill, located east of the City of Paso Robles.

Discussion

- (a) *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

The project would not require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities. Portable chemical toilets would be available for use by construction crews. No new facilities are proposed and no relocation of existing utilities are required; therefore no impacts would occur.

- (b) *Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?*

The project does not require any connections to water and would not require any long-term operational water use. Project requirements for water would be limited to water for dust control during construction, which would be trucked to the site; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

- (c) *Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?*

The project does not require connection to any public or private wastewater treatment providers. Portable restrooms would be brought on site for use by workers and other personnel throughout the construction period. As described in (a), the project would not require wastewater treatment or affect the capacity of existing wastewater treatment services, and no impacts would occur.

- (d) *Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?*

Project generation of solid waste would consist of construction of the new bridge and approach roads. These materials would be disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations and are not expected to be in excess of local standards or capacity. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- (e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

As previously described, the project would be limited to the operation of an existing roadway and would not result in the long-term generation of solid waste above existing conditions. Construction-related waste (i.e., excavated soils) would be disposed of according to federal and state regulations. The project operational impacts would not result in an increase in long-term solid waste and would be compliant with solid waste reduction statutes and regulations. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The County would not require relocation of existing utilities for the project. The project would have less than significant effects on utilities and other service systems and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XX. WILDFIRE

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

Setting

As described in Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, the project is in a high Fire Hazard Severity Zone along Huasna Townsite Road. The project site is in a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

(CalFire) responsibility area. The closest CalFire station is in Nipomo, located approximately 20 miles from the project site; the response time is 30 to 40 minutes for Huasna Townsite Road.

Discussion

(a) *Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?*

The project site is not in an area subject to an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Construction is expected to take approximately nine months while the existing temporary bridge is to remain operational and in place. Construction notifications would be provided to fire departments, emergency responders, schools, transit companies, and local residents in accordance with the project Public Outreach Plan to ensure that project construction would not result in undue delays for emergency situations. Therefore, the project would not interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, and impacts would be less than significant.

(b) *Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?*

The project is in a high Fire Hazard Severity Zone along Huasna Townsite Road. The project area is characterized by a generally flat topography and scattered oaks and riparian vegetation. The project would be limited to the construction of a permanent bridge over Huasna River and would not result in the construction of any structures or buildings that could increase the potential for a wildfire to occur in the immediate or surrounding area. Construction activities would be required to be conducted in accordance with Chapter 33 of the 2022 CFC (Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition) to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition during short-term construction activities. Based on required compliance with CFC requirements, the project would not exacerbate wildfire risks; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

(c) *Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?*

The project will not relocate overhead or underground utility lines adjacent to the project area. Construction activities would be required to be conducted in accordance with Chapter 33 of the 2022 CFC (Fire Safety During Construction and Demolition) to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition during short-term construction activities. Further, the project would not introduce new utility infrastructure or increase the density of existing overhead lines that could otherwise increase risk of wildfire ignition in the project area. Based on required compliance with CFC requirements, the project would not exacerbate wildfire risks; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

(d) *Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?*

As previously identified, the project site is characterized by generally flat topography with a low risk of landslides. Further, the project site is located within a 100-year flood zone.

The project includes the construction of a new permanent bridge crossing over Huasna River. The purpose of the proposed project is to construct a safe bridge crossing over Huasna River. The proposed bridge design is being informed by site-specific geotechnical data and a detailed engineering design that ensures conformance with state and federal design standards. The proposed bridge would be constructed in accordance with

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Caltrans and other applicable engineering standards to reduce risk associated with post-fire ground-failure events and therefore impacts would be less than significant.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Based on required compliance with CFC, Caltrans, and other applicable engineering requirements, the proposed project and associated activities would not result in significant adverse impacts related to wildfire, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

- (a) *Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?*

The project has the potential to degrade the quality of the environment. Incorporation of Mitigation Measures related to Air Quality (AQ-1 through AQ-3), Biological Resources (BIO-1 through BIO-26), Cultural Resources (CR-1 through CR-4), and Hazards and Hazardous Materials (HZ-1 through HZ-3) included in Exhibit B would ensure that the project would not substantially adversely affect air or water quality, reduce the number of fish and wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plant or animal species, and/or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or pre-history. Therefore, the anticipated project-related impacts are less than significant with mitigation.

- (b) *Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?*

The project does not propose a new or different use than the existing use of the bridge and approach sections along Huasna Townsite Road. The project would be located within existing County right-of-way. Operational impacts would be comparable to the current conditions in terms of traffic, aesthetics, and environmental footprint, and would be improved from the perspective of stormwater treatment. The project would not contribute to cumulative floodplain impacts and would provide an incremental improvement in flood conveyance by reducing the footprint of structures adjacent to Huasna River. The project would also improve safety for agricultural vehicles by increasing bridge width. Construction-related impacts of the project would be temporary and of limited duration and scope. The project is not expected to have impacts that would be individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. Therefore, project impacts, when considered together with past, on-going, and future projects in the vicinity, would not be cumulatively considerable and would not compound or increase other environmental impacts. Therefore, all project-related impacts would be less than significant.

- (c) *Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?*

The project has a substantial beneficial effect on human beings by replacing a bridge that has been temporarily replaced and therefore poses a potential safety hazard to life and property if not replaced with a new permanent bridge. The proposed project would provide a safe bridge meeting current design standards and would increase safety for agricultural vehicles. The project would not result in environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Direct effects on human beings would be limited to temporary traffic delays during construction with potential minor increases in travel times. The anticipated effects of the project would not substantially conflict with any adjacent land uses. The project is not expected to have adverse effects and is expected to have some beneficial effects on human beings. Therefore, the project does not have the potential to have environmental effects that could result in substantial adverse effects on human beings, and impacts would be less than significant.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Conclusion/Mitigation

With the implementation of the project-specific Mitigation Measures related to Air Quality (AQ-1 through AQ-3), Biological Resources (BIO-1 through BIO-26), Cultural Resources (CR-1 through CR-4), and Hazards and Hazardous Materials (HZ-1 through HZ-3) included in Exhibit B, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment with mitigation.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Exhibit A - Initial Study References and Agency Contacts

The County Public Works Department has contacted various agencies for their comments on the proposed project. With respect to the subject application, the following have been contacted (marked with an) and when a response was made, it is either attached or in the application file:

| Contacted | Agency | Response |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | County Public Works Department | Not Applicable |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | County Environmental Health Services | No Concerns |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | County Agricultural Commissioner's Office | No Concerns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | County Airport Manager | Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Airport Land Use Commission | Not Applicable |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Air Pollution Control District | In File** |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | County Sheriff's Department | Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Regional Water Quality Control Board | Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CA Coastal Commission | Not Applicable |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | CA Department of Fish and Wildlife | None |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | CA Department of Forestry (Cal Fire) | In File** |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | CA Department of Transportation | Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Services District | Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ | Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ | Not Applicable |

** "No comment" or "No concerns"-type responses are usually not attached

The following checked ("") reference materials have been used in the environmental review for the proposed project and are hereby incorporated by reference into the Initial Study. The following information is available at the County Public Works Department.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project File for the Subject Application County Documents <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Plan Policies <input type="checkbox"/> Framework for Planning (Coastal/Inland) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Plan (Inland/Coastal), includes all maps/elements; more pertinent elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Element <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation & Open Space Element <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Element <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Element <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise Element <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parks & Recreation Element/Project List <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Element <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Ordinance (Inland/Coastal) <input type="checkbox"/> Building and Construction Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Public Facilities Fee Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Real Property Division Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Airport Land Use Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Wise Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLO Area Plan/San Luis Bay Inland SA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Design Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Resource Summary Report <input type="checkbox"/> South County Circulation Study Other Documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean Air Plan/APCD Handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Transportation Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform Fire Code <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Quality Control Plan (Central Coast Basin – Region 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Resources Map <input type="checkbox"/> Area of Critical Concerns Map <input type="checkbox"/> Special Biological Importance Map <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CA Natural Species Diversity Database <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire Hazard Severity Map <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flood Hazard Maps <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey for SLO County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GIS mapping layers (e.g., habitat, streams, contours, etc.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other See reference list below. |
|--|---|

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

The following project-specific information and/or reference materials have been considered as a part of the Initial Study:

- BEN EN Engineering Services (BEN). 2025. Bridge Design Hydraulic Study Report Huasna Townsite Road Bridge Replacement Project dated March 24, 2025
- California Air Resources Board (CARB). 2022. 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality. December 2022. Available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/2022-sp.pdf>.
- California Department of Conservation (CDOC). 2022. California Important Farmland Finder. Available at: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/>. Accessed February 2025.
- California Department of Transportation and Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2016. Soil Management Agreement for Aerially Deposited Lead Contaminated Soils. State of California Environmental Protection Agency Docket No. ESPO-SMA 15/16-001.
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2018. California State Scenic Highway System Map. Available at: <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.
- California Geological Survey. 2011. Updated Mineral Land Classification Map for Concrete-Grade Aggregates in the San Luis Obispo-Santa Barbara Production-Consumption Region, California - North Half.
- County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works (County). 2026a. Huasna Townsite Road Bridge 300678 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo for CEQA; including CalEEMod reports dated January 2026.
- . 2025b. Section 7 Review for the Proposed Huasna Townsite Road at Huasna River Bridge Restoration dated October 2025
- Dibblee, T.W., 2004, Geologic Map of the Huasna Townsite and Shedd Canyon Quadrangles, San Luis Obispo County, California; Dibblee Foundation Map DF-136.
- San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District (SLOAPCD). 2023a. *CEQA Air Quality Handbook; 2023 Administrative Update Version to APCD Board Adopted 2012 Version*. Available at: https://storage.googleapis.com/slocleanairorg/images/cms/upload/files/CEQA%20Handbook%202023_Final.pdf.
- . 2023b. CEQA Greenhouse Gas Thresholds & Guidance for the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District's 2012 CEQA Air Quality Handbook and Related Guidance on Use of Screening Tool, CalEEMod, and Local Reductions/Sequestration Projects & Offset Mix Calculator. August 9. Available at: https://storage.googleapis.com/slocleanairorg/images/cms/upload/files/2023UpdatedSLOCountyAPCDCEQA-GHG_Guidance%26Thresholds-FINAL-StandAloneVersion.pdf.
- SWCA. 2025. Archaeological Survey Report for the Huasna Townsite Road over Huasna River Bridge Replacement Project, Huasna, San Luis Obispo County, California. October 2025.
- SWCA. 2025a. Huasna Townsite Road over Huasna River Bridge Replacement Project Biological Resources Assessment. November 2025.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

SWCA. 2025b. Huasna Townsite Road over Huasna River Bridge Replacement Project Aquatic Resources Technical Memorandum. October 2025.

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2025. GeoTracker Database. Available at: <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>. Accessed November 2025.

Yeh and Associates, Inc (Yeh). 2023. Geotechnical Memorandum Huasna Townsite Road Temporary Bridge (over Huasna River) San Luis Obispo County, California. Yeh Project No.: 223-086. September 14, 2023

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Exhibit B - Mitigation Summary

Mitigation Monitoring Plan

The purpose of a Mitigation Monitoring Plan is to provide a program to examine, document and record compliance with the environmental plans and specifications pertinent to the proposed project, in order to comply with Section 21081.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This plan provides the standards and methods necessary to ensure and document the implementation of the environmental mitigation measures which have been included in the project description as well as with the conditions of approval placed on project permits. Responsibility for ensuring successful implementation of the Mitigation Monitoring Plan lies with the County of San Luis Obispo, as the project proponent and Lead Agency for the project under CEQA. If the recommended mitigation measures and monitoring plan are implemented successfully, the potential significant adverse effects stemming from project construction will be reduced to a level of insignificance.

Mitigation monitoring will be carried out by the County's Environmental Programs Division. Upon approval of the CEQA document and issuance of all required permits, the Environmental Programs Division will assign internal responsibility for compliance with each mitigation measure to one or more members of the project team. Responsible parties include the Environmental Programs Division, the Project Manager (PM), the Resident Engineer (RE), and/or on-site monitors.

Mitigation measures are organized into project design, pre-construction, construction, and post-construction tasks. Compliance with mitigation measures is documented in the project file through written reports, accompanied by project photos where necessary. Post-construction monitoring of revegetation and other project components is documented by yearly reports, on a schedule typically determined by one or more of the project permits. Depending on the complexity of the post construction mitigation effort, tasks will be carried out by county staff or technical experts under contract to the County. Post-construction monitoring is typically conducted for three to five years, depending on permit requirements and success criteria.

Details of post-construction habitat restoration and mitigation, monitoring, and success criteria have been incorporated into a draft Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for the project. The HMMP would be finalized based on permit requirements. Implementation and oversight of the HMMP would be provided by the County's Environmental Programs Division.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Mitigation Measures

Air Quality Mitigation Measures

AQ-1 Projects with grading areas that are greater than 4 acres or are within 1,000 feet of any sensitive receptor shall implement the following mitigation measures to minimize nuisance impacts and to significantly reduce fugitive dust emissions:

- Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible.
- Use of water trucks or sprinkler systems, in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site and from exceeding the APCD's limit of 20% opacity for greater than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period. Increased watering frequency would be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible. Please note that during drought conditions, water use may be a concern and the contractor or builder shall consider the use of an APCD-approved dust suppressant where feasible to reduce the amount of water used for dust control.
- All dirt stock-pile areas should be sprayed daily and covered with tarps or other dust barriers as needed.
- Permanent dust control measures identified in the approved project revegetation and landscape plans and/or specifications should be implemented as soon as possible following completion of any soil disturbing activities.
- Exposed ground areas that are planned to be reworked at dates greater than one month after initial grading should be sown with fast-germinating, non-invasive grass seed and watered until vegetation is established.
- All disturbed soil areas not subject to revegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, jute netting, or other methods approved in advance by the APCD.
- All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible, and building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding, soil binders or other dust controls are used.
- Vehicle speed for all construction vehicles will not exceed 15 mph on any unpaved surface at the construction site.
- All trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered or should maintain at least two feet of freeboard (minimum vertical distance between the top of the load and the top of the trailer) in accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 23114.
- "Track-Out" is defined as sand or soil that adheres to and/or agglomerates on the exterior surfaces of motor vehicles and/or equipment (including tires) that may then fall onto any highway or street as defined in the California Vehicle Code Section 23113 and California Water Code 13304. To prevent Track Out, designate access points and require all employees, subcontractors, and others to use them. Install and operate a "track-out prevention device" where vehicles enter and exit unpaved roads onto paved streets. The track-out prevention device can be any device or combination of devices that are effective at preventing track out, located at the point of intersection of an unpaved area and a paved road. If paved roadways accumulate tracked out soils, the track-out prevention device may need to be modified.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- Sweep streets at the end of each day if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent paved roads. Water sweepers with reclaimed water should be used where feasible.
- All fugitive dust mitigation measures shall be shown on grading and building plans and/or specifications.
- The contractor or builder shall designate a person or persons whose responsibility is to ensure any fugitive dust emissions do not result in a nuisance and to enhance the implementation of the mitigation measures as necessary to minimize dust complaints and reduce visible emissions below the APCD's limit of 20% opacity for greater than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period. Their duties shall include holidays and weekend periods when work may not be in progress (for example, wind-blown dust could be generated on an open dirt lot). The name and telephone number of such persons shall be provided to the APCD Compliance Division prior to the start of any grading, earthwork or demolition.

AQ-2 Portable construction equipment, 50 horsepower (hp) or greater, used during construction activities may require California statewide portable equipment registration (issued by the California Air Resources Board) or an APCD permit. To minimize potential delays, prior to the start of the project, the APCD Engineering & Compliance Division should be contacted for specific information regarding permitting requirements.

AQ-3 In addition to the state-required diesel idling requirements, the County will comply with these more restrictive requirements to minimize impacts to nearby sensitive receptors:
To the maximum extent feasible, staging and queuing areas will not be located within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors. If staging areas must be located within less than 1,000 feet, then additional signage will be used to remind project personnel that construction activities are occurring within close proximity to sensitive receptors and that compliance with the said air quality regulations must be maintained at all times. The use of alternatively fueled equipment is recommended and will be used to the maximum extent practicable.

Biological Resources Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 Prior to construction, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan or Water Pollution Control Plan will be prepared for the project in accordance with County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department requirements. Provisions of this plan will be implemented during and after construction as necessary to avoid and minimize erosion and stormwater pollution in and near the work area.

BIO-2 Prior to construction, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department will prepare a conceptual Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) that provides for appropriate restoration for temporary impacts and mitigation for permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas. Any revegetation will be conducted using native plant species. The HMMP will identify the specific mitigation sites and will be implemented immediately following project completion.

BIO-3 Prior to construction, the contractor will prepare a Hazardous Materials Response Plan to allow for a prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. Workers will be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- BIO-4** Prior to construction, all personnel will participate in an environmental awareness training program conducted by a qualified biologist. The program will include a description of the special-status resources within the project boundary. If appropriate, the biologist may train and designate a representative of the County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department or other designee to provide crew training as needed during construction.
- BIO-5** Prior to construction, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department will retain a qualified biological monitor(s) to monitor construction and ensure compliance with the avoidance and minimization efforts outlined in all project environmental documents. At a minimum, monitoring will occur during initial ground disturbance activities and vegetation removal.
- BIO-6** Prior to initiation of any construction activities, including vegetation clearing or grubbing, sturdy high-visibility fencing will be installed to delineate the specified project disturbance limits and protect environmentally sensitive areas (ESA). This ESA fencing will be placed so that unnecessary adverse impacts to the adjacent habitats are avoided, including oak woodland. No construction work (including storage of materials) will occur outside of the specified project limits. The fencing will remain in place during the entire construction period, will be monitored periodically by a qualified biologist, and will be maintained as needed by the contractor.
- BIO-7** Construction activities adjacent to Huasna River and in riparian bank areas will be targeted to the dry season (generally May 1 through October 31) to the extent feasible to minimize potential water quality impacts to the creek and potential for sedimentation and erosion control issues due to precipitation events.
- BIO-8** The contractor will submit a diversion and dewatering plan for County approval prior to implementation. The plan will include use of screened intakes and pumping dewatering discharge to an appropriate location for storage/settling or filtering prior to discharge to an upland vegetated area. Dewatering activities will not discharge directly to the river channel.
- BIO-9** During construction, trash will be contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, trash and construction debris will be removed from the work areas.
- BIO-10** During construction, the cleaning and refueling of equipment and vehicles will occur only within a designated staging area and at least 60 feet (20 meters) from riparian habitat, wetlands, or other aquatic areas. At a minimum, equipment and vehicles will be checked and maintained daily to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills.
- BIO-11** During construction, erosion control measures (e.g., silt fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers) will remain available on-site and will be used as necessary to prevent erosion and sedimentation beyond the project disturbance limits. No synthetic plastic mesh products will be used for erosion control and use of these materials on-site is prohibited. Erosion control measures and other suitable best management practices (BMPs) will be checked to ensure that they are intact and functioning effectively and maintained daily throughout the duration of construction. The contractor will also apply adequate dust control techniques, such as site watering, during construction to protect water quality.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- BIO-12** During construction, no pets will be allowed on the construction site.
- BIO-13** Prior to construction, a preconstruction survey shall be conducted to ensure special-status plant species are not present within the BSA. If special-status plant species are present, the location and number of individuals will be recorded and suitable mitigation will be incorporated into the project plans, such as seed collection and replanting of special-status species. Observations of these or other special-status species shall be documented on CNDDDB forms and submitted to the CDFW upon project completion.
- BIO-14** Prior to construction, a preconstruction survey shall be conducted during the appropriate blooming period to ensure special-status plant species are not present within the BSA. If Gambel's watercress is found within the BSA, all work will be stopped immediately, the USFWS will be notified, and work will not commence until consultation is completed. If other special-status plant species are present, the location and number of individuals will be recorded and suitable mitigation will be incorporated into the project plans, such as seed collection and replanting of special-status species. Observations of these or other special-status species shall be documented on CNDDDB forms and submitted to the CDFW upon project completion.
- BIO-15** Prior to the start of project activities and if work is planned to occur during the flight period of April 1 to September 1, a qualified biologist shall survey for Crotch bumble bee within the work area 2 weeks prior to the start of initial ground disturbance. If a Crotch bumble bee nest is observed, no work shall occur within 25 feet of the nest until it is no longer active. If an exclusion buffer is not feasible, the County shall coordinate with the qualified biologist, and appropriate resource agencies as applicable for further guidance. If Crotch bumble bee is found during the active spring and summer period (April 1 to September 1), or presence is unknown (e.g., if a survey during the active period was not completed) and work is planned between October 1 and March 31, potential overwintering habitat shall be identified by the qualified biologist and avoided by a minimum of 50 feet. If potential overwintering habitat cannot be avoided, the County shall coordinate with the qualified biologist and appropriate resource agencies as applicable for further guidance. The County shall coordinate with appropriate resource agencies for guidance to implement project activities and avoid take of the species or proceed with an Incidental Take Permit. The results of the surveys shall be provided to the appropriate resource agencies prior to initial project activities. Because bumble bees move nest sites each year, surveys shall be conducted each year prior to ground disturbance within undisturbed habitat in the project site.
- BIO-16** Biological monitoring specified by Measure BIO-5 will include observations, monitoring, and appropriate response for Northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, two-striped gartersnake and any other special-status species, including plants and wildlife. If wildlife is encountered during work, work in that area will be halted and it shall be allowed to escape the work area. If it is unable to leave the work area, contact the Environmental Programs Division for next steps.
- BIO-17** The following measures are consistent with the Programmatic Biological Opinion (USFWS 2011) for California red-legged frogs. The County and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) anticipate the proposed project will qualify for FESA incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

1. Only USFWS-approved biologists will participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs. Biologists authorized under the Programmatic Biological Opinion do not need to resubmit their qualifications for subsequent projects conducted pursuant to the Programmatic Biological Opinion, unless the USFWS has revoked their approval at any time during the life of the Programmatic Biological Opinion.
2. Ground disturbance will not begin until written approval is received from the USFWS that the biologist(s) is qualified to conduct the work. Caltrans will request approval of the biologist(s) from the USFWS.
3. A USFWS-approved biologist will survey the work area no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog is found and these individuals are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist will be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work activities begin. The USFWS-approved biologist will relocate the California red-legged frog the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the proposed action. The relocation site should be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. Caltrans will coordinate with the USFWS on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frog.
4. Before any activities begin, a USFWS-approved biologist will conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training will include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished. Brochures, books, and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is on hand to answer any questions.
5. A USFWS-approved biologist will be present at the work site until the California red-legged frog have been relocated out of harm's way, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, the County Public Works Department will designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with minimization measures. The USFWS-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the training outlined in Measure BIO-5 above and in the identification of California red-legged frog. If the monitor or the USFWS-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frog would be affected in a manner not anticipated by the USFWS, Caltrans, and the County during the review of the proposed action, they will notify the resident engineer (the engineer that is directly overseeing and in command of construction activities) immediately. The resident engineer will either resolve the situation by eliminating the adverse effect immediately or require that all actions that are causing these effects be halted. If work is stopped, the USFWS, Caltrans, and the County will be notified as soon as possible.
6. During project activities, all trash that may attract predators will be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris will be removed from work areas.
7. All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles will occur at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and in a location from where a spill would not drain directly toward aquatic habitat (e.g., on a slope that drains away from the water). The monitor will ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- the onset of work, Caltrans and the County will ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers will be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.
8. Habitat contours will be returned to their original configuration at the end of project activities. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the proposed action, unless the USFWS, Caltrans, and the County determine that it is not feasible, or modification of original contours would benefit California red-legged frog.
 9. The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and total area of activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goals. ESAs will be delineated to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.
 10. Caltrans and the County will attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog 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–May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frog through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and coordination between the USFWS and Caltrans during project planning will be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of year.
 11. To control sedimentation during and after project implementation, Caltrans and the County will implement BMPs outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authorities of the CWA that it receives for the specific project. If BMPs are ineffective, Caltrans will attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in coordination with the USFWS.
 12. If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes will be completely screened with wire mesh no larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frog from entering the pump system. Water will be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow will be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed will be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material will be removed from the streambed upon completion of the project.
 13. Unless approved by the USFWS, water will not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.
 14. A USFWS-approved biologist will permanently remove any individuals of nonnative species, such as American bullfrogs, signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*), and centrarchid fishes (family Centrarchidae) from the project area to the maximum extent possible. The USFWS-approved biologist will be responsible for ensuring their activities are in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

15. If Caltrans and the County demonstrate that disturbed areas have been restored to conditions that allow them to function as habitat for the California red-legged frog, these areas will not be included in the amount of total habitat permanently disturbed.
16. To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the USFWS-approved biologist, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Task Force will be followed at all times.
17. The project area will be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials will be used to the extent practicable. Invasive exotic plants will be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities with the project, unless the USFWS, Caltrans, and the County have determined that it is not feasible or practical.
18. Caltrans and the County will not use herbicides as the primary method used to control invasive exotic plants. However, if Caltrans and the County determine the use of herbicides is the only feasible method for controlling invasive plants at a specific location, the following additional measures to protect California red-legged frog will be implemented:
 - a. Caltrans and the County will not use herbicides during the breeding season for California red-legged frog.
 - b. Caltrans and the County will conduct surveys for California red-legged frog immediately prior to the start of herbicide use. If found, California red-legged frog will be relocated to suitable habitat far enough from the project area that no direct contact with herbicide would occur.
 - c. Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) and other invasive plants will be cut and hauled out by hand and painted with glyphosate-based products, such as Aquamaster or Rodeo.
 - d. Licensed and experienced Caltrans staff or a licensed and experienced contractor will use a hand-held sprayer for foliar application of Aquamaster or Rodeo where large monoculture stands occur.
 - e. All precautions will be taken to ensure that no herbicide is applied to native vegetation.
 - f. Herbicides will not be applied on or near open water surfaces (no closer than 60 feet from open water).
 - g. Foliar applications of herbicide will not occur when wind speeds are in excess of 3 miles per hour.
 - h. No herbicides will be applied within 24 hours of forecasted rain.
 - i. Application of herbicides will be completed by qualified Caltrans staff, County staff, or contractors to ensure that overspray is minimized, that application is made in accordance with the label recommendations, and that required and reasonable safety measures are implemented. A safe dye will be added to the mixture to visually denote treated sites. Application of herbicides will be consistent with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs Endangered Species Protection Program bulletins.
 - j. All herbicides, fuels, lubricants, and equipment will be stored, poured, or refilled at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies in a location where a spill would not drain

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

directly toward aquatic habitat. Caltrans and the County will ensure that contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the onset of work, Caltrans and the County will ensure that a plan is in place for a prompt and effective response to accidental spills. All workers will be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

BIO-18

The following measures, developed in accordance with the USFWS' recently drafted proposed avoidance and minimization measures, will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts to southwestern pond turtle and its habitat:

1. Prior to initiation of construction activities, workers shall participate in environmental awareness training provided by a USFWS-approved biologist. The training shall instruct workers regarding 1) how to identify the turtle; 2) the habitats used by the turtle; 3) the potential for turtle egg clutches (i.e., nest sites) to be discovered during vegetation clearing; and 4) what to do if a turtle or suspected egg clutch is encountered during construction activities.
2. Preconstruction surveys for southwestern pond turtles shall be conducted by a USFWS-approved biologist no more than 48 hours before onset of work, if feasible, when weather conditions are suitable to detect basking southwestern pond turtles and again immediately prior to clearing and grubbing, equipment staging, excavation or other construction-related activities requiring the use of heavy equipment (e.g., Bobcat) within the BSA.
3. Prior to conducting preconstruction surveys, the USFWS-approved biologist shall prepare a relocation plan that describes the appropriate survey and handling methods for southwestern pond turtle and identify nearby relocation sites where individuals would be relocated if found during the preconstruction surveys. The relocation plan shall be submitted to USFWS for review prior to the start of construction activities. The animal shall be relocated to equivalent or better habitat relative to where it was found.
4. If any life stage of the southwestern pond turtle (adults, hatchlings, or eggs) is found and individuals are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, project activities that may harm the species will be halted until the individuals move out of harm's way or until a USFWS-approved biologist can capture and relocate them. The approved biologist(s) will be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work begins/restarts.
5. When feasible, the project proponent will avoid night work and conduct project activities no earlier than 30 minutes after sunrise and no later than 30 minutes before sunset each day. If nighttime work is necessary, lighting will be directed to the work area and shielded to prevent spillover into occupied or assumed occupied habitat outside the work area.
6. A USFWS-approved biologist will be present at the work site until all southwestern pond turtles have been relocated out of harm's way, to conduct inspections of installed exclusion fencing, and to ensure all workers have received environmental awareness training and initial ground disturbance of habitat (5 inches of topsoil [12 centimeters]) is completed. After this time, the County may designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The USFWS-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the environmental awareness training outlined above in the identification of southwestern pond turtles.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

7. To the extent feasible, no equipment will be left on-site overnight outside of the designated areas, defined as those areas that are enclosed with fencing or some other barrier designed to reasonably prevent wildlife from entering, or, if the USFWS approves, the area must be checked for southwestern pond turtles before the equipment is moved.
8. Project-related vehicles will observe a 15-mile-per-hour speed limit within construction areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Off-road traffic outside of designated and fenced project work areas will be prohibited.
9. After construction, the County will replace any basking structures that are removed. If a potential basking structure such as a discarded vehicle tire or other trash item that southwestern pond turtles are known to use is removed, then it should be replaced with a more natural suitable basking structure (e.g., logs, rocks).
10. No pets will be permitted at the project site, to avoid and minimize the potential for harassment, injury, and death of the southwestern pond turtle.
11. All holes and trenches must be covered overnight or have adequate means of escape (e.g., earthen or wooden board ramps not more than 2:1 slope).

BIO-19

Implementation of the following efforts are recommended to avoid and minimize potential effects to least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher (and other nesting migratory birds) if present.

1. Prior to construction, when feasible, tree removal will be scheduled to occur from September 16 to February 14, outside of the typical nesting bird season, to avoid potential adverse effects to nesting birds.
2. If construction activities are proposed during the typical nesting season (February 15–September 15), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by qualified biologists no more than 2 weeks prior to the start of construction to determine presence/absence of nesting birds within the BSA and immediate vicinity. Caltrans will be notified if federally listed nesting bird species are observed during the surveys and will facilitate coordination with the USFWS, if necessary, to determine an appropriate avoidance strategy. Likewise, coordination with the CDFW will be facilitated by the County Public Works Department if necessary to devise a suitable avoidance plan for state-listed nesting bird species. If raptor nests are observed within the BSA during the preconstruction nesting bird surveys, the nest(s) shall be designated an environmentally sensitive area and protected by a minimum 500-foot avoidance buffer until the breeding season ends or until a qualified biologist determines that all young have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival. Similarly, if active passerine nests are observed within the BSA during the preconstruction nesting bird surveys, the nest(s) shall be designated an environmentally sensitive area and protected by a minimum 250-foot avoidance buffer until the breeding season ends or until a qualified biologist determines that all young have fledged and are no longer reliant on the nest or parental care for survival. Qualified biologists in consultation with resource agencies may consider proposed variances from these buffers if there is a compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as protection of a nest through concealment due to site topography.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

- BIO-20** Project activities shall not begin between February 1 and August 31 unless a qualified biologist conducts visual surveys for nesting activity of bald eagle and golden eagle within the work area and a 500-foot radius no more than 14 days before project activities begin. Surveys shall be conducted at appropriate nesting times and concentrate on suitable nesting structures for the species. If any active bald eagle or golden eagle nests are found within the work area, Project activity shall not occur until after a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest for survival. Active bald eagle or golden eagle nests outside the work area but within the 500-foot buffer shall be monitored throughout construction to ensure construction activities are not disturbing nesting activity in compliance with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Monitoring shall ensure protection of the bird's normal behavior thereby preventing nesting failure or abandonment by evaluating the birds' apparent distress in the presence of people or equipment at various distances. Abnormal nesting behaviors that may cause reproductive harm include but are not limited to defensive flights/vocalizations directed toward project workers, standing up from a brooding position, and flying away from the nest. The qualified biologist shall have authority to order the cessation of all nearby project activities if abnormal behavior that may cause reproductive failure such as nest abandonment and loss of eggs and/or young is observed. The qualified biologist shall monitor the behavior of all birds at the nest site to ensure that they are not disturbed by project activity. Nest monitoring must continue during project activity until the qualified biologist documents that the young have fully fledged, are no longer reliant on the nest site, and are no longer being fed by parents.
- BIO-21** A qualified biologist shall survey the work area to identify active woodrat houses within 14 days prior to the start of construction. All active woodrat houses shall be avoided and protected during project activities with a minimum 25-foot no-disturbance buffer. If houses cannot be avoided by this buffer, the buffer may be reduced and this reduction shall be documented. If direct impacts to the woodrat house cannot be avoided, a qualified biologist shall dismantle or relocate houses by hand during the nonbreeding season, between October 1 and December 31, allowing any animals to escape either along existing woodrat trails or toward other available habitat. If a litter of young is found or suspected, house material shall be replaced immediately and left alone for 2 to 3 days before a recheck to determine whether the animals have left. Dismantled houses may be reassembled in suitable habitat outside the work area, as determined by a qualified biologist. The County shall document all woodrat houses dismantled and any houses that were relocated, including maps of those locations.
- BIO-22** Any American badger detected within the work area during project activities shall be allowed to move out of the work area of its own volition. If American badger is denning on or within 50 feet of the work area, the County shall maintain a 50-foot no-disturbance buffer around the burrow entrance. If this buffer is not feasible, a qualified biologist shall determine whether the buffer may be reduced and document buffer reduction.
- BIO-23** Preconstruction surveys for roosting bats shall be performed by a qualified biologist within 14 days prior to the start of project activity in roosting-suitable trees within the work area and a 50-foot buffer. Survey methodology may include visual surveys of bats such as evening emergence surveys, inspection of suitable habitat for bat sign (guano), and/or use of ultrasonic detectors (i.e., Anabat) as appropriate for the site. A bat survey report that includes, but is not limited to, the survey methodology, and biologist qualifications and, if bats are present, the colony size,

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

roost location, and other characteristics, shall be submitted to the Environmental Programs Division at least 7 days prior to initiating work. If surveys confirm that bats roost in areas that will be impacted by the project (e.g., tree removal, or limbing), the County, in conjunction with a qualified biologist, shall identify measures for the contractor to implement to ensure the passive exclusion of bats. The measures shall outline how bats will be passively excluded from daytime roosts, outside the maternity season. No exclusion shall occur if a documented or potential maternity colony may be present or if temperatures would be too low to ensure that bats emerge. Following any initial negative survey finding and any delay to the start of work of more than 14 days, a repeat bat survey shall be conducted prior to the start of work to address the possibility of bats colonizing the work area or 50-foot buffer before the project begins.

- BIO-24** Native oak trees greater than 4 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) that are removed or trimmed for the project will be replaced in accordance with County practice. Replacement trees will be planted in County right-of-way in the project area or in similar settings in the general vicinity, with the goal of replacing the existing tree functions as close to the project area as feasible. Replanting will be completed as soon as it is feasible (e.g., irrigation water is available, grading has been completed in replant area[s]). Replanted areas will be either in native topsoil or areas where native topsoil has been reapplied. Only designated trees will be removed or trimmed without prior approval from the County Environmental Programs Division.
- BIO-25** The following avoidance and minimization efforts are recommended to address invasive species.
1. Vegetation removed from the construction site will be taken to a certified landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species.
 2. To avoid the spread of invasive species, the contractor will stockpile topsoil and redeposit the stockpiled soil on slopes after construction is complete or transport all topsoil to a certified landfill for disposal.
 3. 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 (152 millimeters) containing the seed layer in areas with weedy species will be disposed of at a permitted landfill.
 4. During construction, the project will make all reasonable efforts to limit the use of imported soils for fill. Soil currently existing on-site should be used for fill material. If the use of imported fill material is necessary, the imported material must be obtained from a source that is known to be free of invasive plant species, or the material must consist of purchased clean material such as crushed aggregate, sorted rock, or similar.
 5. The landscape and restoration planting plans will emphasize the use of native species expected to occur in the area. Project plans will avoid the use of plant species that the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC), CDFW, or other resource organizations consider to be invasive or potentially invasive (Cal-IPC 2025). Prior to the start of construction, all project landscape and restoration plans shall be verified to ensure that the plans do not include the use of any species considered invasive by the Cal-IPC or CDFW.
- BIO-26** As part of jurisdictional permit applications, the County will prepare an HMMP that will follow guidelines to satisfy USACE, CDFW, and RWQCB. The HMMP will provide for a 1:1 restoration ratio for temporary impacts and a 3:1 mitigation ratio for permanent impacts. To the extent feasible, mitigation activities will be implemented within areas of the BSA. Any revegetation will

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

be conducted using only native plant species. In the event on-site mitigation is not feasible to fulfill all mitigation requirements, off-site mitigation will be pursued with a priority for options near the BSA or in the same watershed. The HMMP will identify the specific mitigation sites and will be implemented immediately following project completion.

Cultural Resources Mitigation Measures

- CR-1** Prior to construction, an archaeologist will provide a pre-construction archaeological briefing to all construction crews prior to initiating ground disturbing activities. The briefing will provide guidance on historical and archaeological resources and appropriate procedures to follow if such finds are inadvertently exposed during the project.
- CR-2** During initial ground disturbance in native soil within the waterway, cultural resource monitoring shall be conducted by a qualified archaeologist, with advance notification provided to a representative(s) from the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) and Salinan Tribe of Monterey, San Luis Obispo Counties to provide for the identification, evaluation, treatment, and protection of any cultural resources that are affected by or may be discovered during construction of the proposed project. "Initial ground disturbance" is defined as first-pass construction disturbance; once areas of native soil have been disturbed by construction and have been found not to contain cultural materials, archaeological and tribal monitoring is not necessary during subsequent construction disturbance. If the archaeological team, in direct coordination with the County and the tribe(s), determines the potential for encountering archaeological resources is negligible, archaeological monitoring may be reduced or cease at any time. A monitoring schedule will be coordinated prior to construction to give each tribe equal representation while ensuring that site safety is maintained at a relatively narrow project site.
- CR-3** During construction, if previously unidentified cultural materials are unearthed, work will be halted in that portion of the project area until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. Additional archaeological surveys will be needed if the project limits are extended beyond the present survey limits.
- CR-4** During construction, as specified by California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, if human remains are found on the project site, the person responsible for the excavation, or his or her authorized representative, will immediately notify the San Luis Obispo County Coroner's office, and the County Environmental office by telephone. No further excavation or disturbance of the discovery or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains (as determined by an Archaeologist and/or Native American monitor) will occur until the Coroner has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code 5097.98.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Mitigation Measures

- HZ-1** Any staging or equipment/vehicle parking areas will be free of combustible vegetation and work crews will have shovels and fire extinguishers on site during all construction activities.
- HZ-2** The contractor will be responsible for appropriate handling, storage, management, and disposal of all waste, including hazardous and potentially hazardous materials, including but not limited to dewatering fluids, materials containing lead-based paint or asbestos, contaminants in soil, treated wood, asphalt, and bridge demolition debris.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

HZ-3

The contractor will be responsible for providing notifications to all parties potentially affected by the construction detour (e.g., adjoining and affected residents, bus services, postal services, fire departments, schools, and emergency responders). Advance notification will be provided as needed to keep potentially affected parties informed of the detour route, schedule, and any modifications for the duration of the construction period.